Artists & ILLUSTRATORS
HOW-TO GUIDES
VOLUME 2

PAINTING

with watercolours, acrylics and oils

TIPS, TECHNIQUES AND TUTORIALS FOR ARTISTS OF ALL LEVELS

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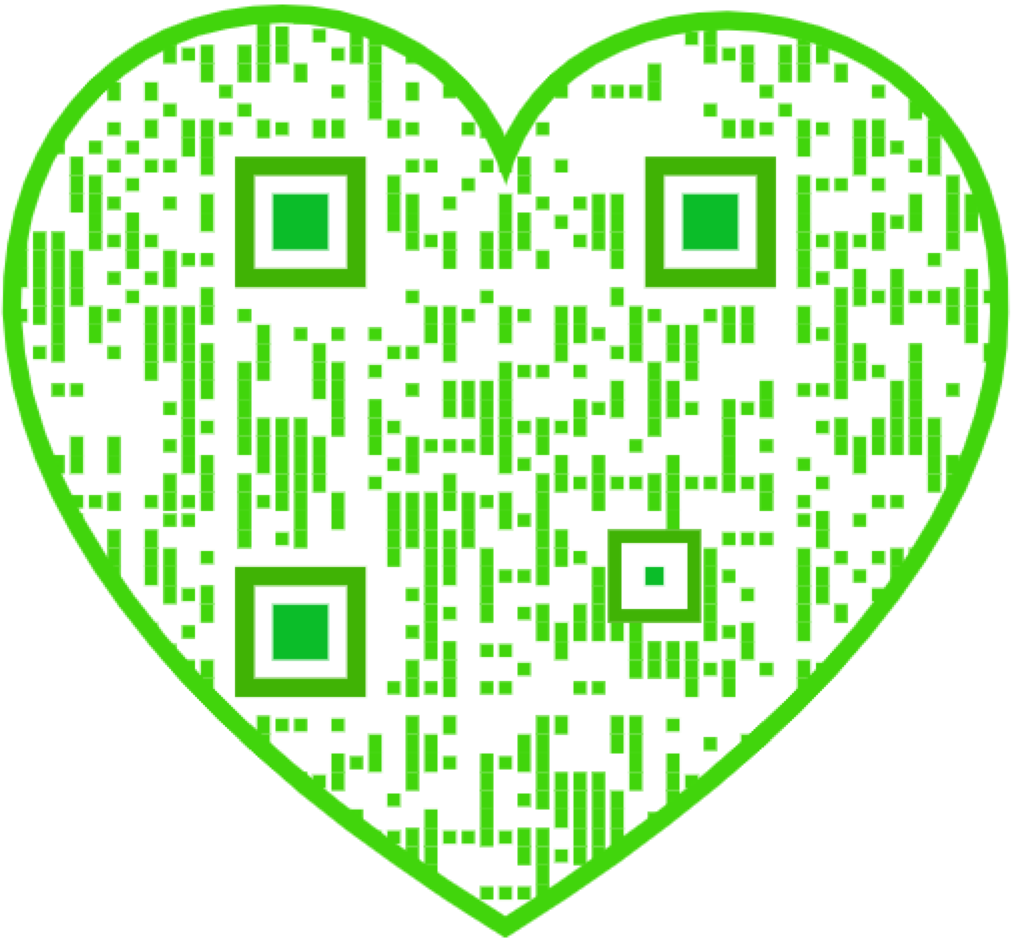

Welcome to your second *free* How To guide, this time on Painting in watercolours, acrylics and oils!

When it's time to begin work on your next painting, it's important to have the right tools for the job. But when that tool is paint, you have to make a choice: what's the right medium for you? Watercolour, oil or acrylic paint? It can be a minefield. Because there are so many kinds of paints that you can choose between – all with different results – having multiple options for a kind of paint, and technique, can mean a real headache for beginner painters.

This handy supplement will help you master pro-painting techniques. They're clearly explained and demonstrated with practical step-by-step sequences, which show you how to build up your painting, layer by layer, for fabulous results. You will also learn about mixing colours on the surface of your art, discover some of the techniques used by the pros, whilst also discovering a style that suits you and allows you to paint with confidence. Dabble in different painting styles to find the style that fits your personality, preference and style perfectly.

It also gives lots of inspiration on subjects to paint – from flowers to landscapes to interiors – and more! What better way to get enthused and excited about your painting techniques? Along with your monthly dose of *Artists & Illustrators*, it's all the art education you need.

On your marks, get set...go!

Niki Browes Editor

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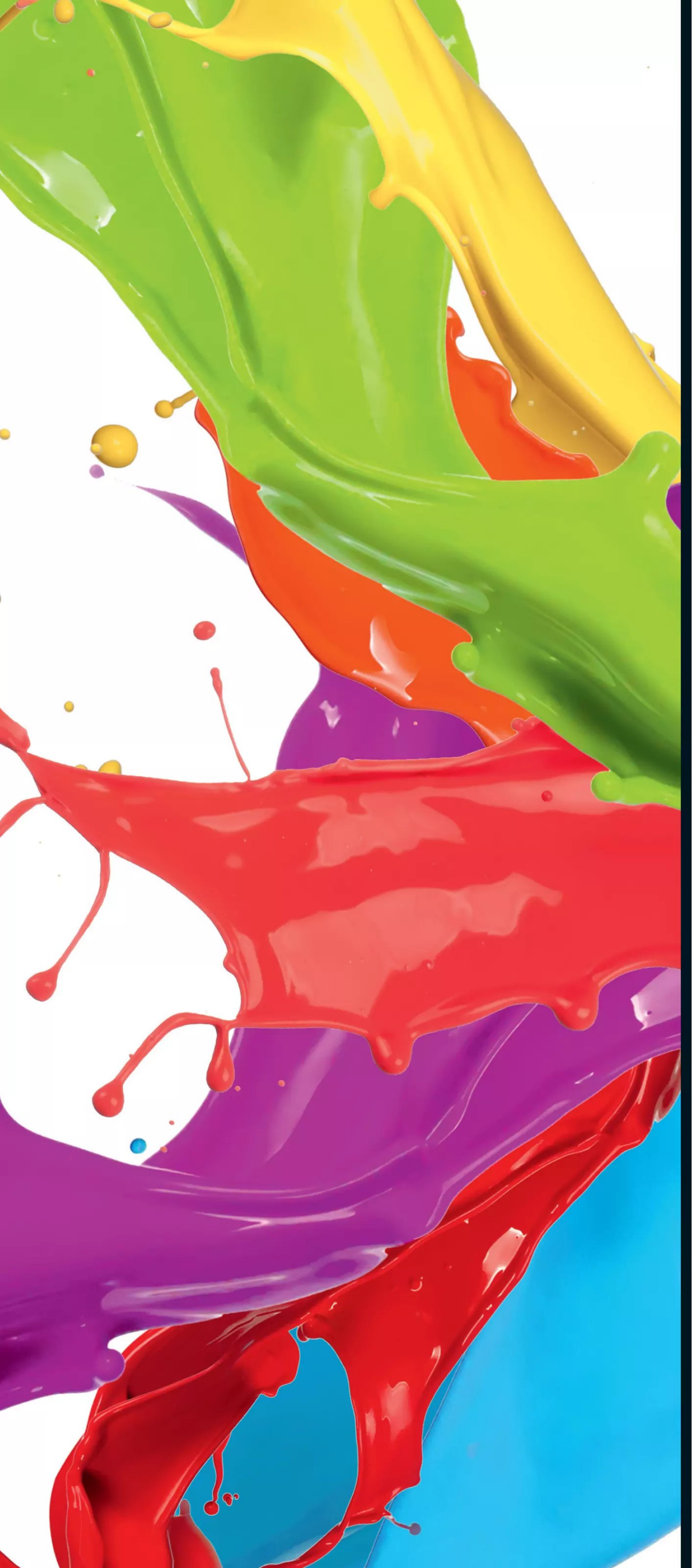

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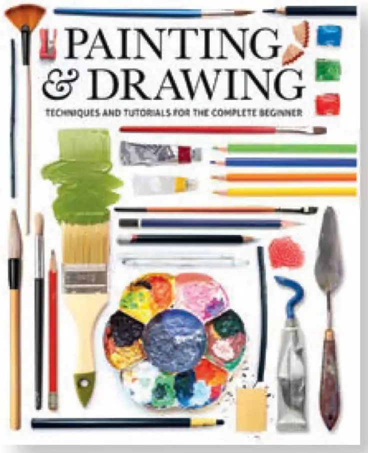
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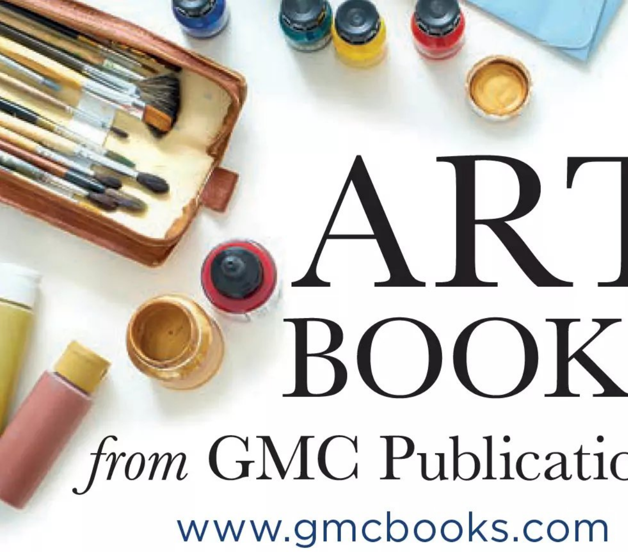

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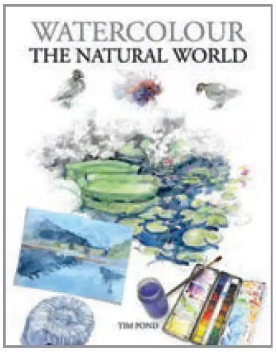
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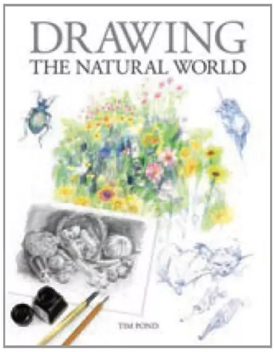
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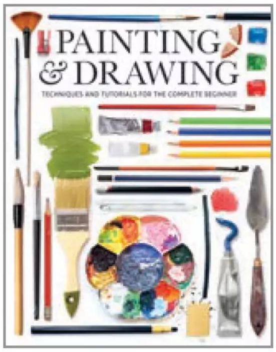
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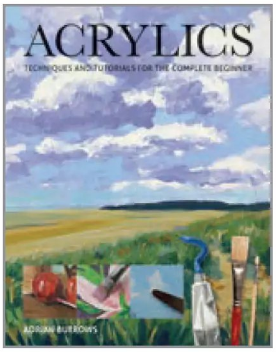
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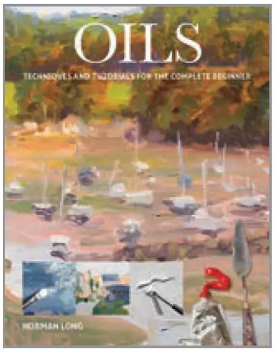
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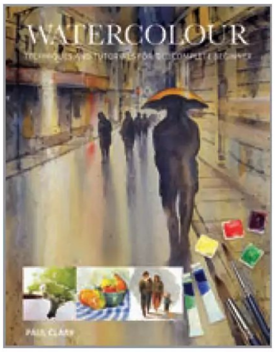
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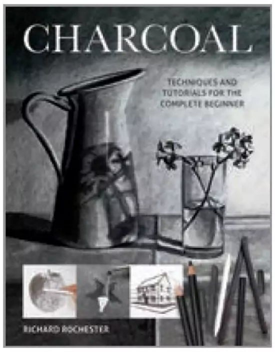
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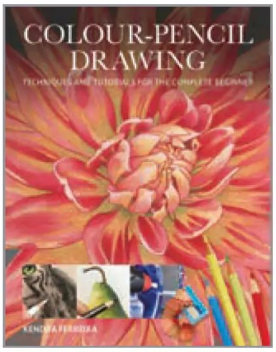
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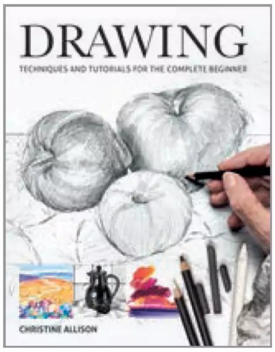
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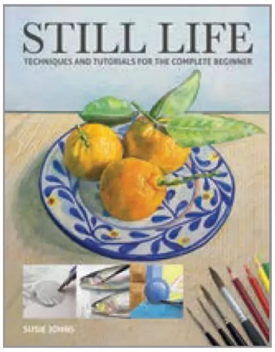
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WATERCOLOURS

Watercolour is an incredibly beautiful painting medium. Its vibrancy and spontaneity can give the impression of effortlessness, but it is these very qualities that also present the biggest challenge, particularly for those starting out.

I have been teaching adults to paint using watercolour for more than 25 years. Unlike other books that teach watercolour I would like you, the reader, to feel as though you are taking part in one of my painting classes; the lessons set out in the following pages replicate those I run in my studios. Teaching is my passion and I never fail to get a buzz from seeing students become excited by the magic spell that watercolour weaves when painted in a free and uninhibited way.

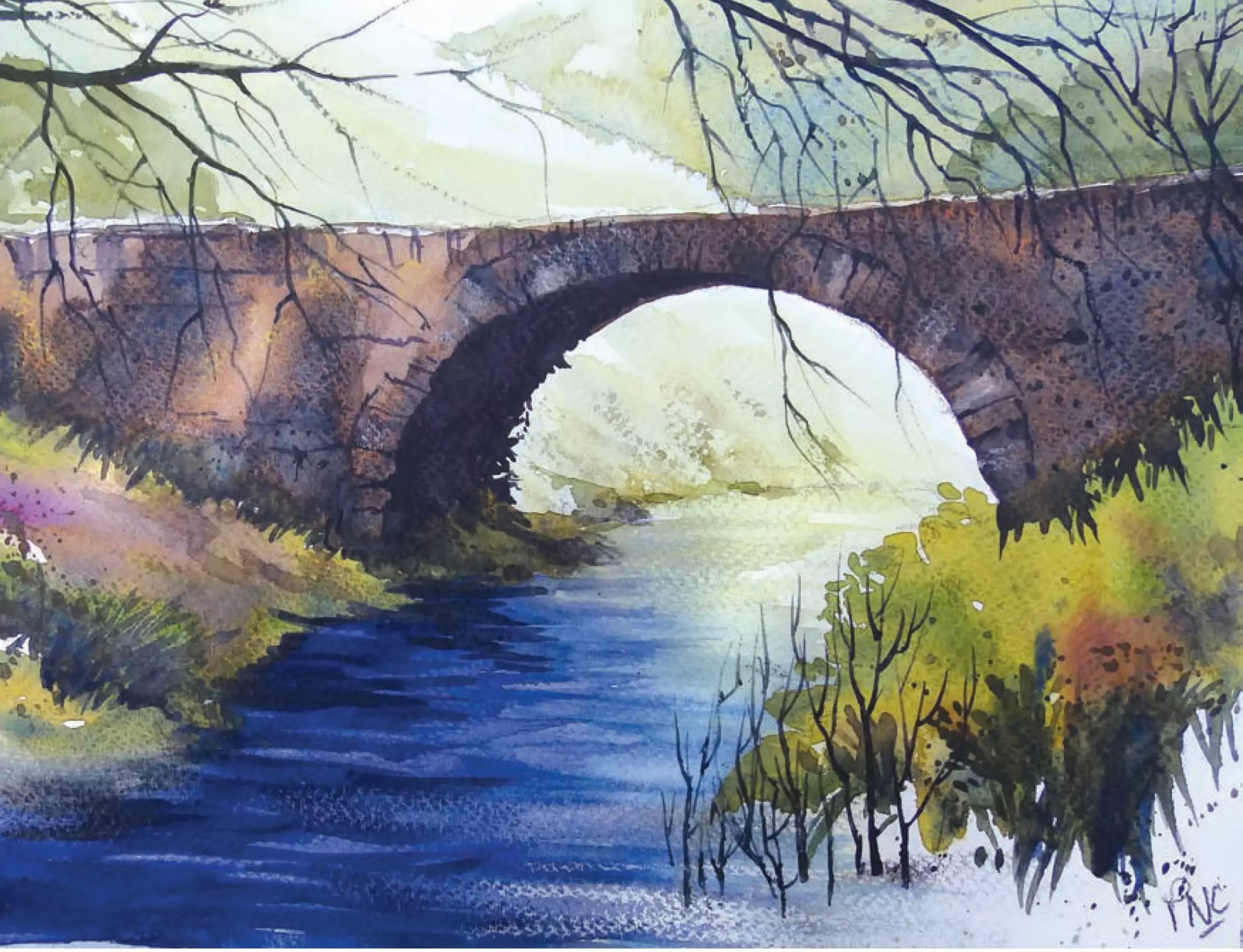
Its very unpredictability makes watercolour both an exhilarating and a frustrating medium, but I firmly believe that you learn just as much from your failures as from your successes. And the wonderful thing is that you will never stop learning. Even after all these years I still find I am learning something new all the time.

I have often felt that the teaching of watercolour can be overly complicated. My basic approach is to make the process as easy as possible, and my whole ethos throughout the tutorials on the following pages is to keep it simple!

My students often hear me use the phrase: ‘Let the paint paint itself!’ The alchemy of watercolour only comes alive by letting the colours flow and move together freely without unnecessary fiddling. This is when those surprising ‘happy accidents’ happen, when what might be considered a mistake actually improves the final result and the painting evolves, helped by the laws of physics. For those of you who haven’t painted since schooldays, getting to grips with painting with watercolour can be quite a challenge. Unlike the art room’s poster paints where solid colour is applied to cover the paper, watercolour is all about transparency, allowing the white of the paper to shine through. I can’t stress enough how important it is to get to know the paint and the way it reacts in different situations, and this comes about only through practice.

When you start, don’t expect to paint a ‘masterpiece’ straight away. Too often I have seen students becoming frustrated and disappointed with their first attempt at a finished piece. I begin with a number of basic techniques for you to practise and I strongly advise you to master these before embarking on the projects that follow. It is also very important that you paint in a relaxed and comfortable place and that you give yourself enough time to make reasonable progress. But most important of all, enjoy the experience, as it will always show in your work.

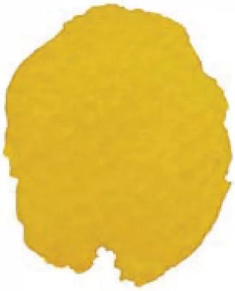
Paul Clark



Roman bridge

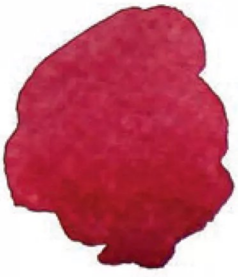
This project is about working from a photo then simplifying the scene, while bringing your own artistic interpretation to make the finished painting more pleasing and personal

Colours needed



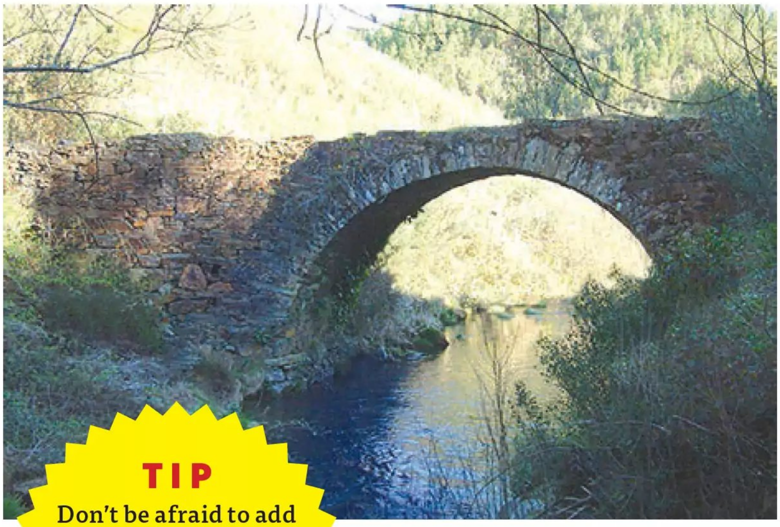
Cadmium Yellow

Cobalt Blue



Alizarin Crimson

Payne's Grey



TIP

Don't be afraid to add interesting colours, take out things you don't like and exaggerate pleasing features

When working from a photographic reference it can become all too easy to focus on replicating exactly what you see rather than using your imagination to enhance it. Don't be a 'slave to the picture'. Keep in mind the fact that the viewer will never see the original photo, only your finished piece, so no one is going to worry about anything that's been added or isn't included. If your aim is to achieve an exact reproduction of the photo you could simply photocopy it!

If you look at the finished painting of this Roman bridge, you will see that it has quite a different feel to the original photograph (right). I've added a lot more branches at the top but taken out most of the detail in the grass banks in the foreground. The distant hills have been suggested by simple washes while leaving out the fine detail of the trees in the middle distance.

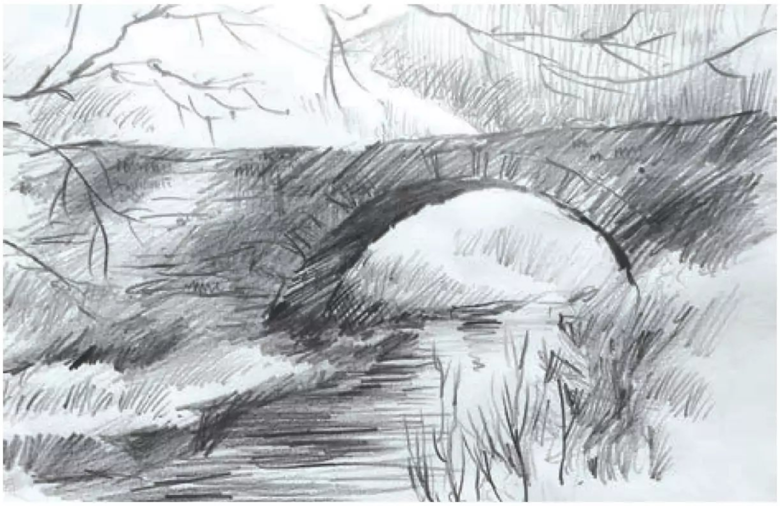
Always remember as you progress through the stages that they are only there as a guide, so don't feel frustrated if your version doesn't match exactly the colours and proportions of my painting. Most importantly, enjoy the experience.

REFERENCE PHOTO

This photograph is an old snapshot taken on holiday in Yorkshire, England, many years ago (before the time of digital cameras, so the quality isn't that good). When choosing a subject to paint, I will start by studying the picture and decide on the elements I like and those that I can improve on. In this photo, I love the way the sun is illuminating the near hillside, showing through the arch of the bridge and reflecting into the water. The way the dappled light is cast across the bridge, leaving the right side in shadow, and the strong dark under the arch are important features that need to be included.

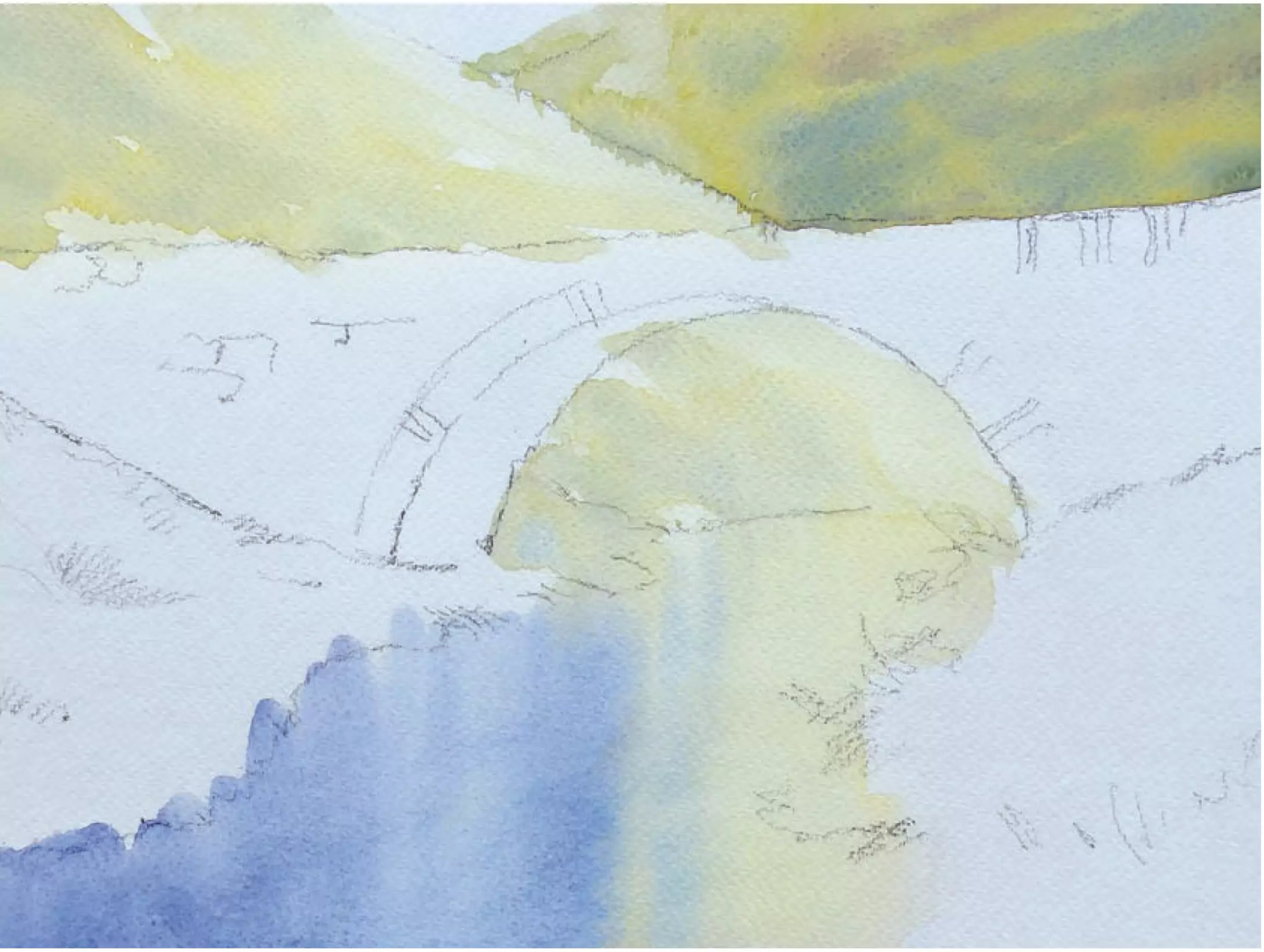
PENCIL SKETCH

I often start by doing a simple pencil sketch that helps me to see where the highlights and shadows are.



Changing a scene into a monochromatic image is an excellent way to see where the tonal values are without the colours getting in the way.

You can also do this by taking a black-and-white photograph of your image. Most smartphones have the option to take a photo in 'mono', which is a quick and easy way of seeing where your darks and lights are. ▶



STAGE 1

Start by making a watery mix of yellow with a touch of blue, and lightly paint the sunlit bank on the left using a No. 12 brush. Keep your brushstrokes moving at the same angle as the hill, making sure you continue right down to the waterline through the bridge but not into the river area.

Now dry your brush with tissue and lift out some of the wet paint to create a few highlights in the bank.

Next, paint the river area using only clean water. Let it soak into the paper for about a minute and drop in at the top the same mix of colour used in the bank, adding some blue. Tilt the paper to an angle of about 45 degrees, letting the paint run down and merge for 30 seconds, then lay it flat again.

Let everything dry and then paint the darker bank on the right at the top. Use a slightly stronger mix of yellow and blue but this time, after you've painted the bank, add a little red to the mix and drop a few strokes into the wet wash.

TIP

Keep your pencilwork to a minimum. Too much drawing can inhibit what you do with the brush

STAGE 2

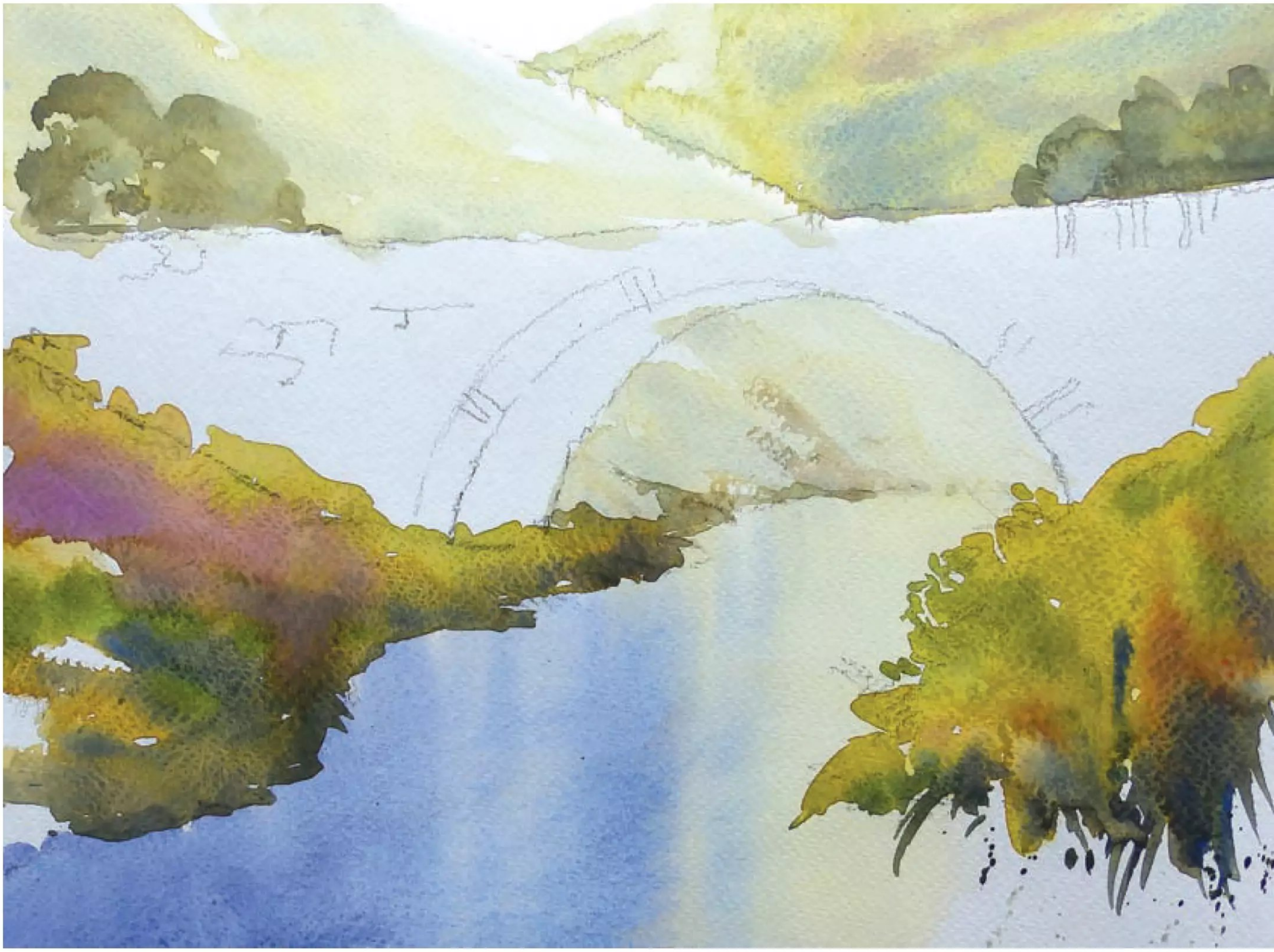
You can now move on to the left and right banks in the foreground. Mix a strong green using mostly yellow with a touch of blue and paint in both banks.

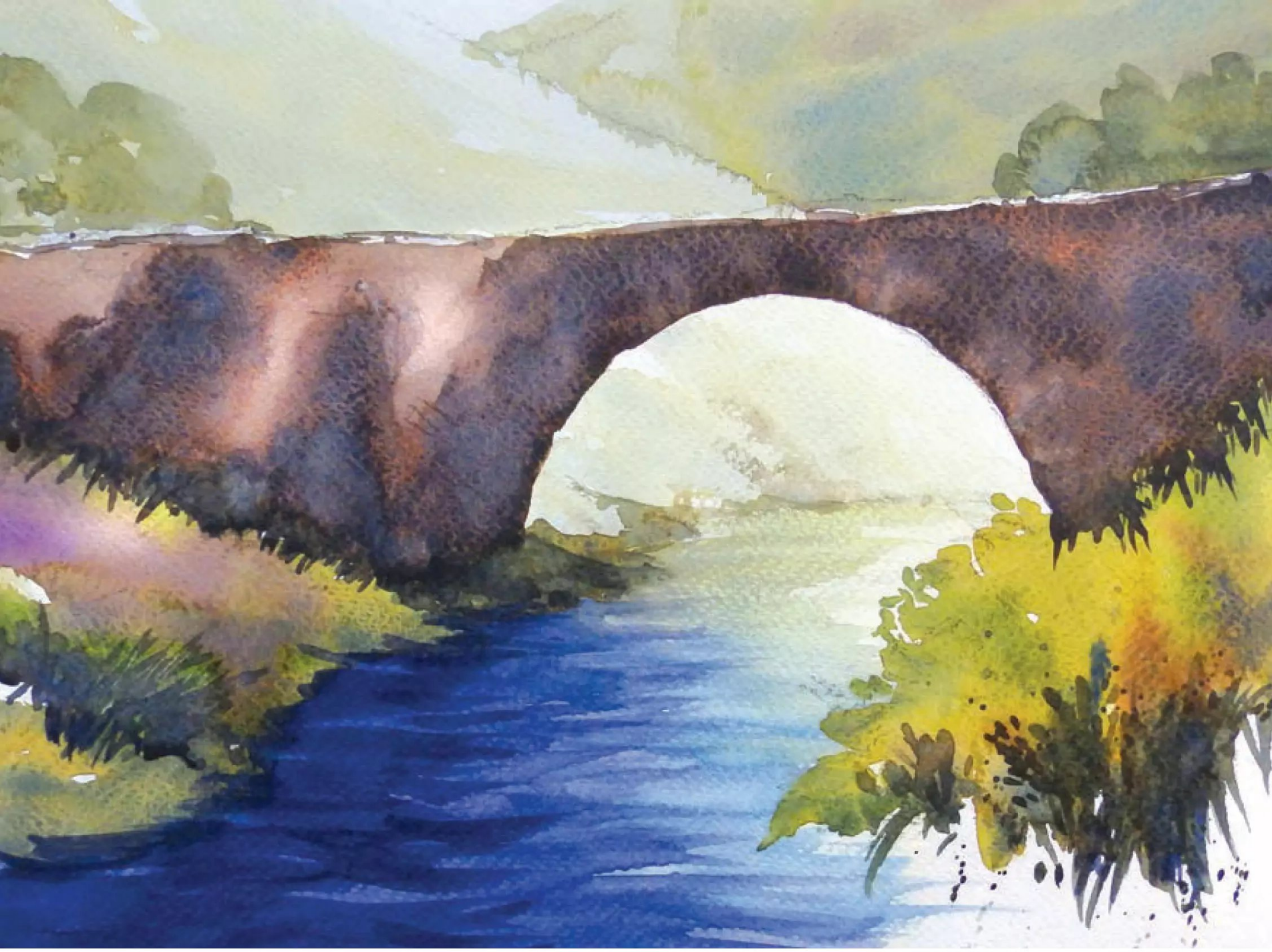
While this is still very wet, drop some pre-mixed colours such as browns, pinks and blueish greens into the wash and let the colours merge. Leave the colours to move and blend on their own without fiddling! While the paint is still wet, use the end of your brush to create some grassy detail to the edges of your washes.

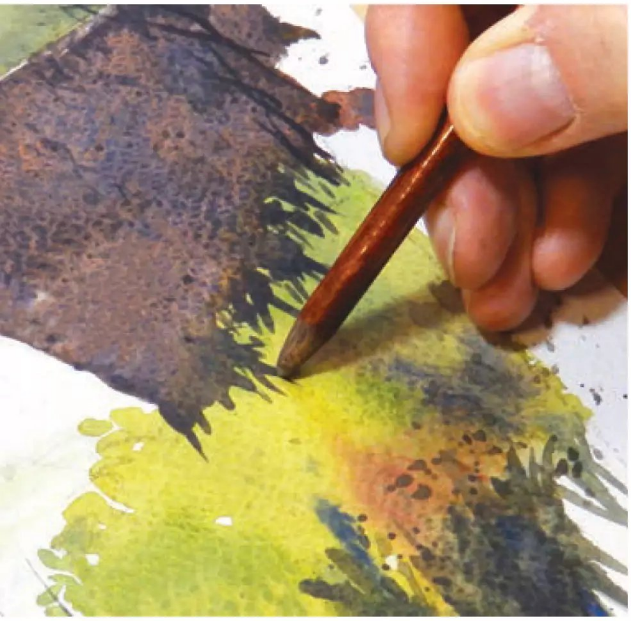
Now paint in the trees at the top of the bridge in a blueish green as simple blob-like shapes. Leave some gaps so the hill behind comes through. Then add a little bit of detail with a dry brush at the waterline through the bridge. Allow to dry for at least 15 minutes before moving on to the next stage. ▶

TIP

Don't worry if you have left some areas of white paper as this can give a sparkle to your painting. Leaving an area unfinished, as I have done in the bottom right-hand corner, can give an 'arty' feel to a painting







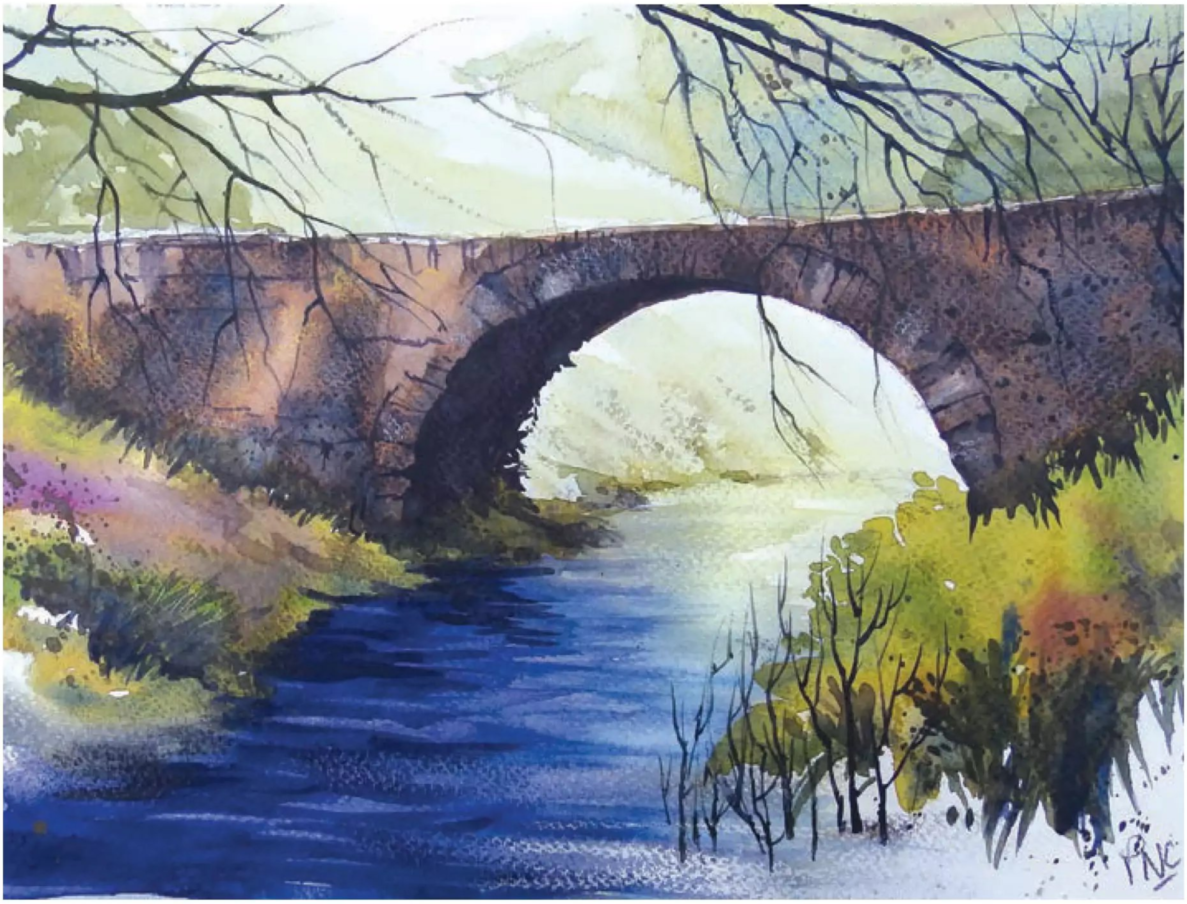
ABOVE Use the end of your brush to 'push in' the very dark tone into the riverbank to create the impression of a grassy edge.

STAGE 3

First, make two mixes: a mid-brown using all three colours and a darker brown by adding more blue. Paint the entire bridge in the mid-brown and let that soak into the paper for about 30 seconds. While it's still wet, drop in the darker brown on the right side, across the top of the arch and the shaded areas on the left of the bridge. Then with a dry brush lift out the sunlit areas on the left side.

Define the top edges of the grass bank where it meets the bridge using the end of your brush (see inset). Follow this by mixing a dark green, using yellow and blue with a hint of red, and paint the darker detail into both foreground banks. Leave to dry for about 10 minutes.

Paint the river in three stages, starting with a light watery blue, keeping your brushstrokes horizontal to suggest the flow of the water. Once dry, paint a second wash of slightly darker blue by adding in a touch of red and making sure the brushstrokes only cover two-thirds of the width of the river. Finally, mix a very dark blue using lots of pigment, and paint in the edge of the bank out into the river.

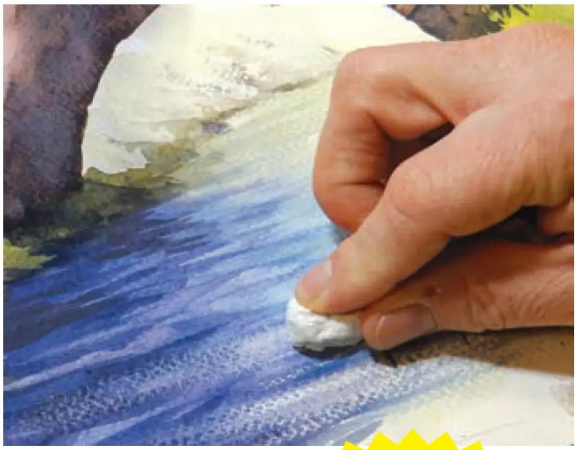


STAGE 4

The final stage is where you add in the detail. First, create the glistening on the water by rubbing a damp tissue horizontally across the river in the foreground and on the left bank (see inset). Next, mix a very dark wash using all three colours but slightly more blue for the branches and the details on the bridge. If you feel your mix isn't dark enough, this is where you can add some Payne's Grey to your mix to give it some extra strength.

Paint in the dark arch under the bridge. Then with your No. 6 brush put in a few lines to suggest some shapes in the stonework. Using the same colour, paint in the trees at the top and bring some of the branches down over the bridge. Finally, paint the twigs and reeds in the foreground and finish off with a bit of texture by splattering some spots of paint into the bridge, trees and bank on the left.

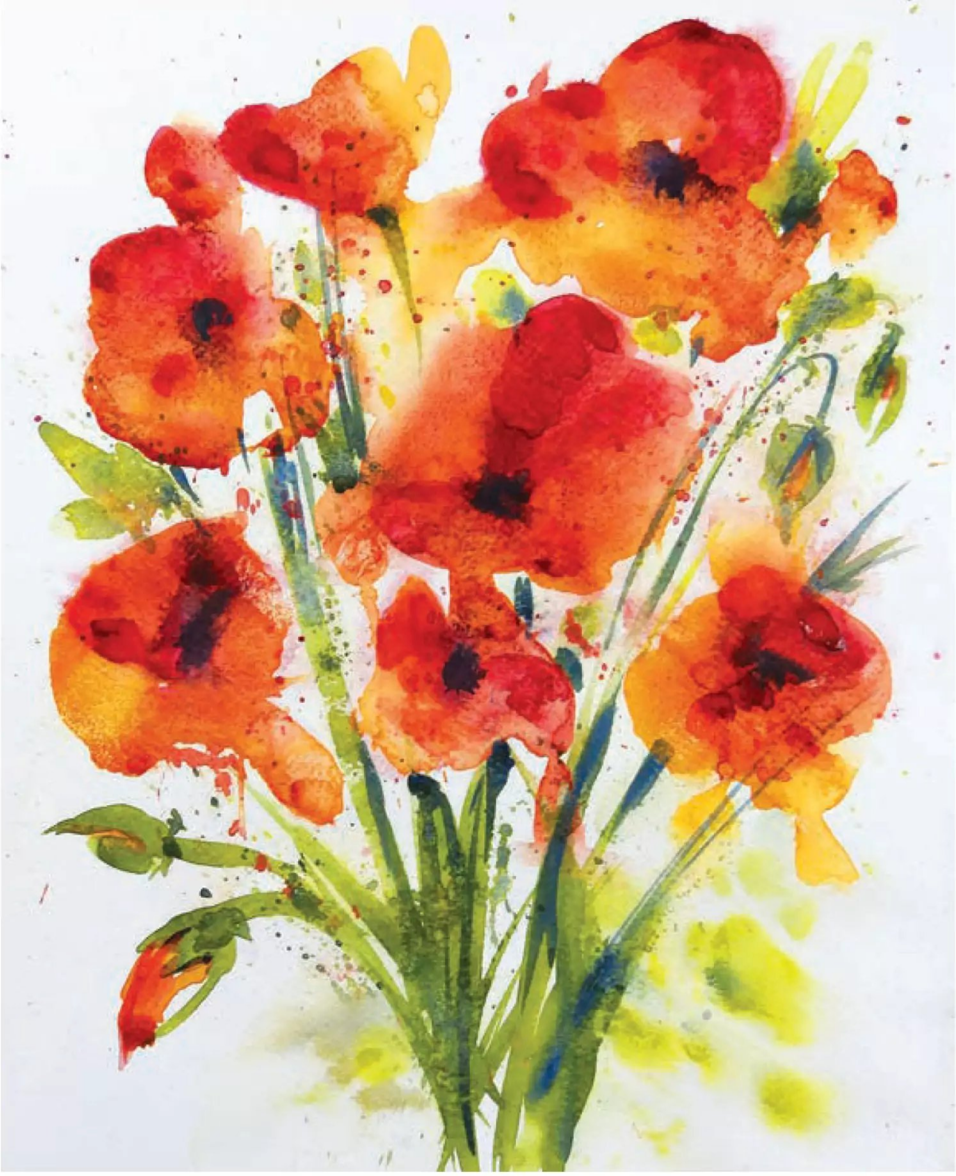
Let your painting dry, then sign and frame it! □



ABOVE Use a damp tissue to lift out some of the paint to create a glistening effect.

TIP

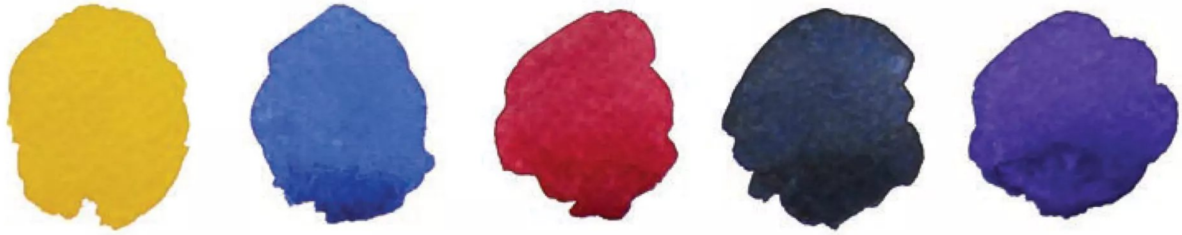
I often use the phrase 'Less is more,' and that certainly is the case when it comes to finishing off your painting, so keep the detail to a minimum.



Flowers

Flowers are an ideal subject to paint in watercolour. Their free-flowing forms and delicate, translucent petals in a stunning array of myriad shades lend themselves to a loose, experimental approach to your painting

Colours needed



Cadmium Yellow

Cobalt Blue

Alizarin Crimson

Payne's Grey

Cobalt Violet

The wet-in-wet technique is perfect for achieving a lot of the lovely blends and colour changes that we see in nature. The patterns and textures noticeable in flowers, and the patterns and textures produced as the watercolour paint moves on the paper, are governed by the same laws of capillarity and osmosis.

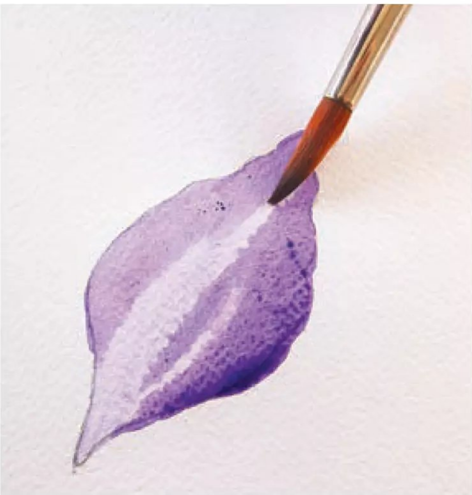
In this project, I would like you to experiment with the paint and have a go at splashing around with colour. It's important to understand that you will never exactly replicate the images shown here because of the unpredictability of the paint when combined with lots of water. I have painted a version of the poppies many times and have never painted two that look remotely the same.

Before you start painting the poppies, I suggest you try an exercise in painting petals, which involves experimenting with colour and lifting out to create highlights and patterns. By focusing in on a detail before starting a whole picture, you will gain confidence in the type of subject matter you are about to approach. This will stand you in good stead for the main project.

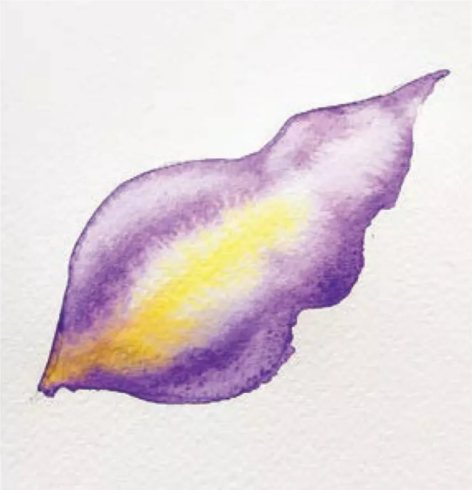
TIP

Think of your final piece as a semi-abstract work and try not to be too concerned about realism – here is your chance to express yourself!

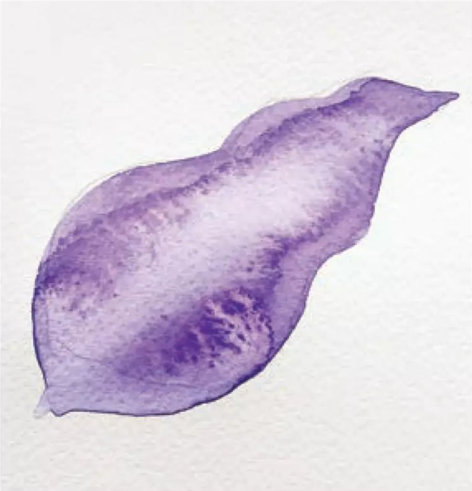
PETALS



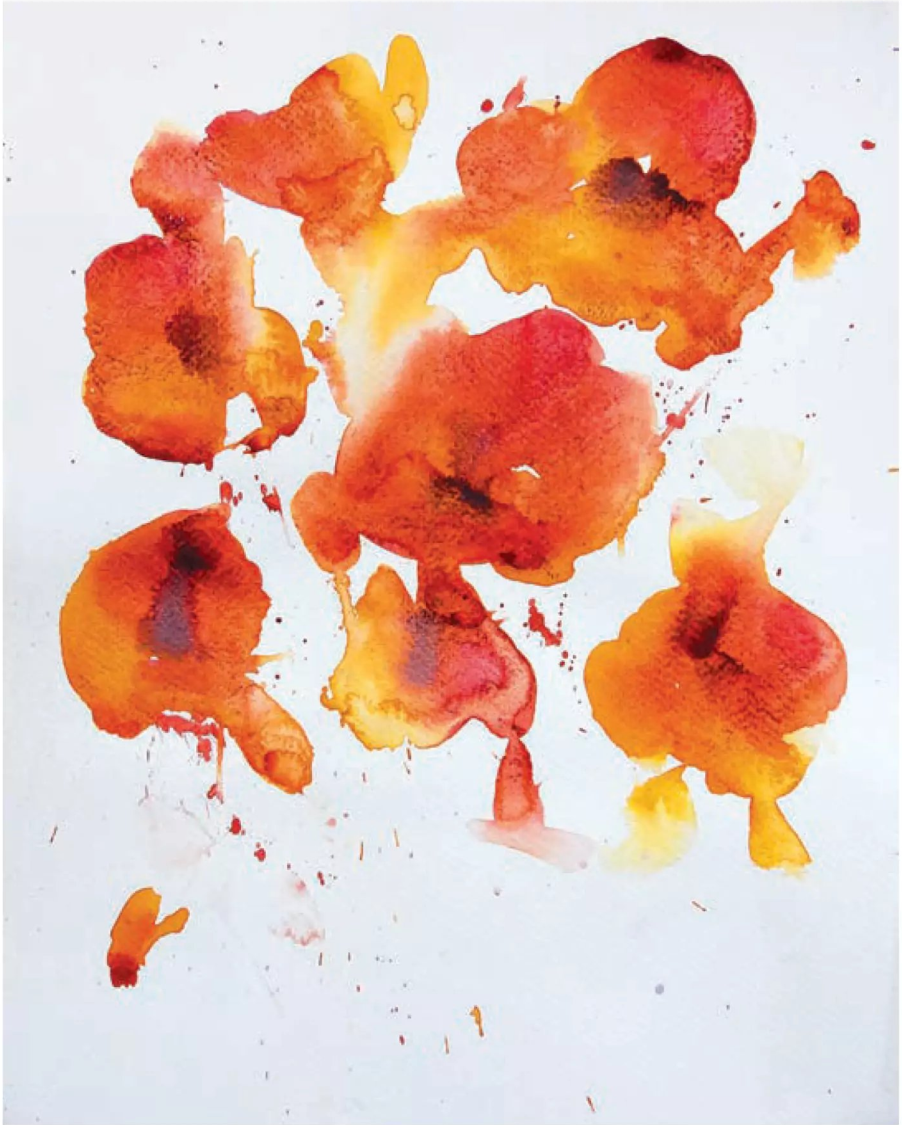
1 Sketch out a simple petal shape and paint in the entire area in purple, allowing the wash to run down and gather to a darker tone at the bottom edge. Before it dries, take your No. 12 brush and lift out to create a highlight in the centre. You may have to do this several times if the wash closes up.



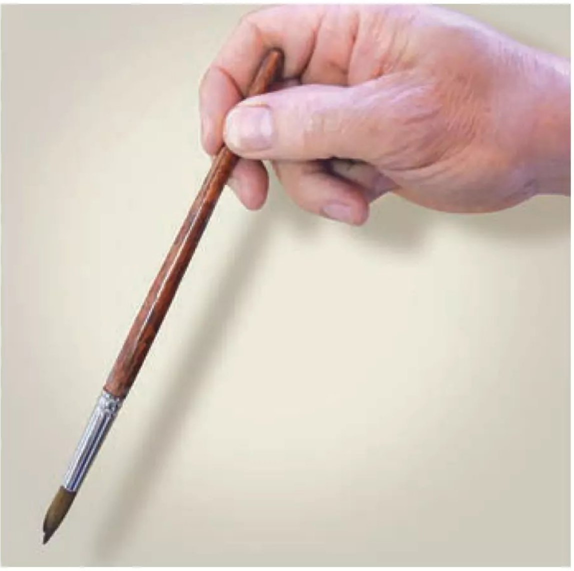
2 Draw another petal shape and paint in purple, as in step 1. This time, while it is still wet, take your No. 12 brush and run a stripe of yellow across the centre, allowing both colours to merge together.



3 Draw another petal shape and again paint the entire area in purple but this time, before it dries, run a line of clean water into the drying wash. This will create a backwash resembling the petal's veins. ▶

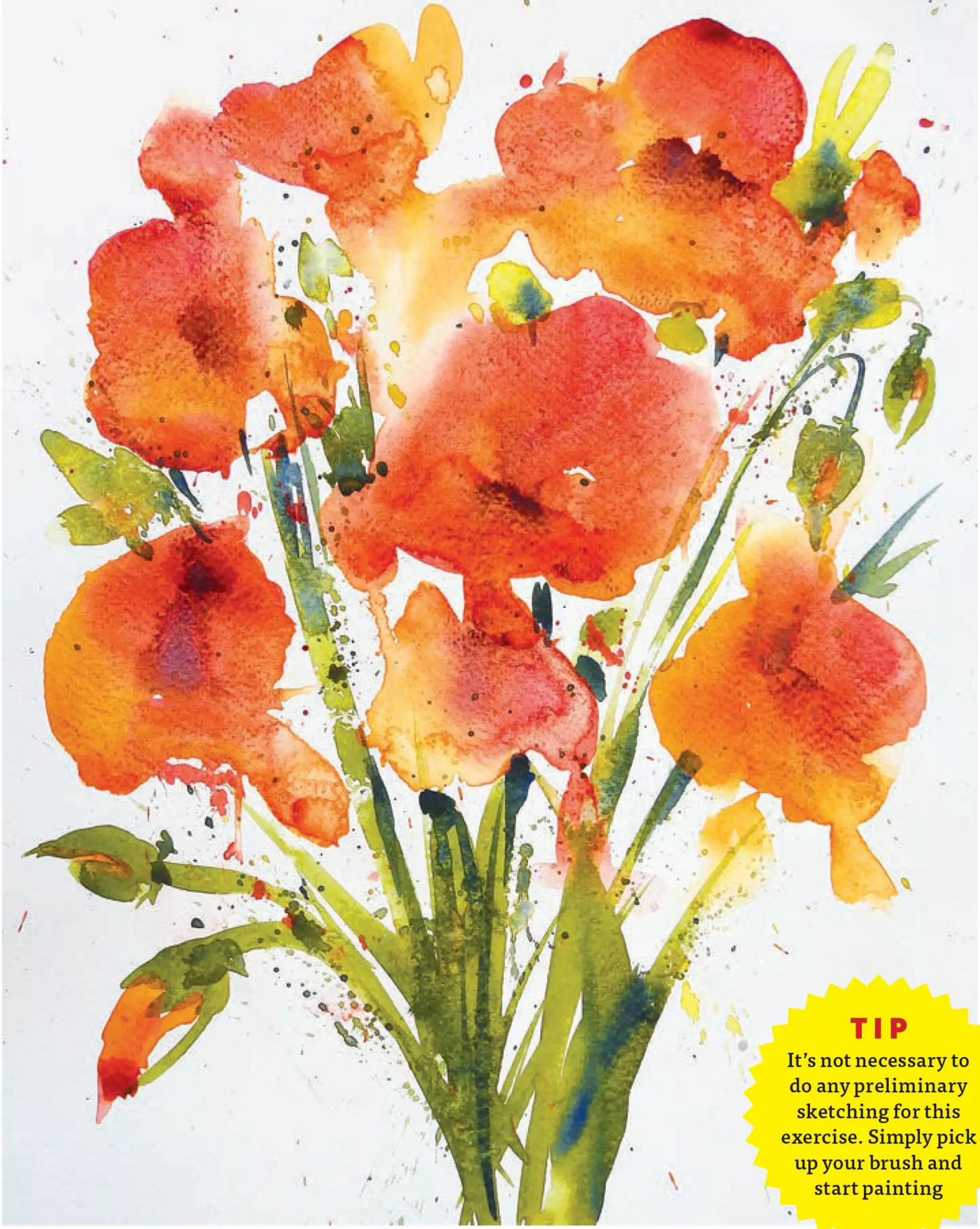


BELOW Hold your paintbrush at the very end to create a much looser and free-flowing brushstroke. This will allow your wrist to have much more movement.



STAGE 1

Make a 50/50 mix of yellow and red to create a bright orange, and a further mix of red using 95% red and 5% blue. Using your No. 12 brush, randomly splash in droplets of clean water across your paper. Then paint in some simple poppy shapes using orange and, while this is still wet, on the right-hand side drop in your red mix. When the paint touches the water droplet you will notice some bleeding but this is all part of the effect you want to achieve. Next, drop a little Payne's Grey into the centre of each poppy, making sure that the washes are still wet. Finally, with your No. 12 brush, splatter some red spots randomly over the paper.



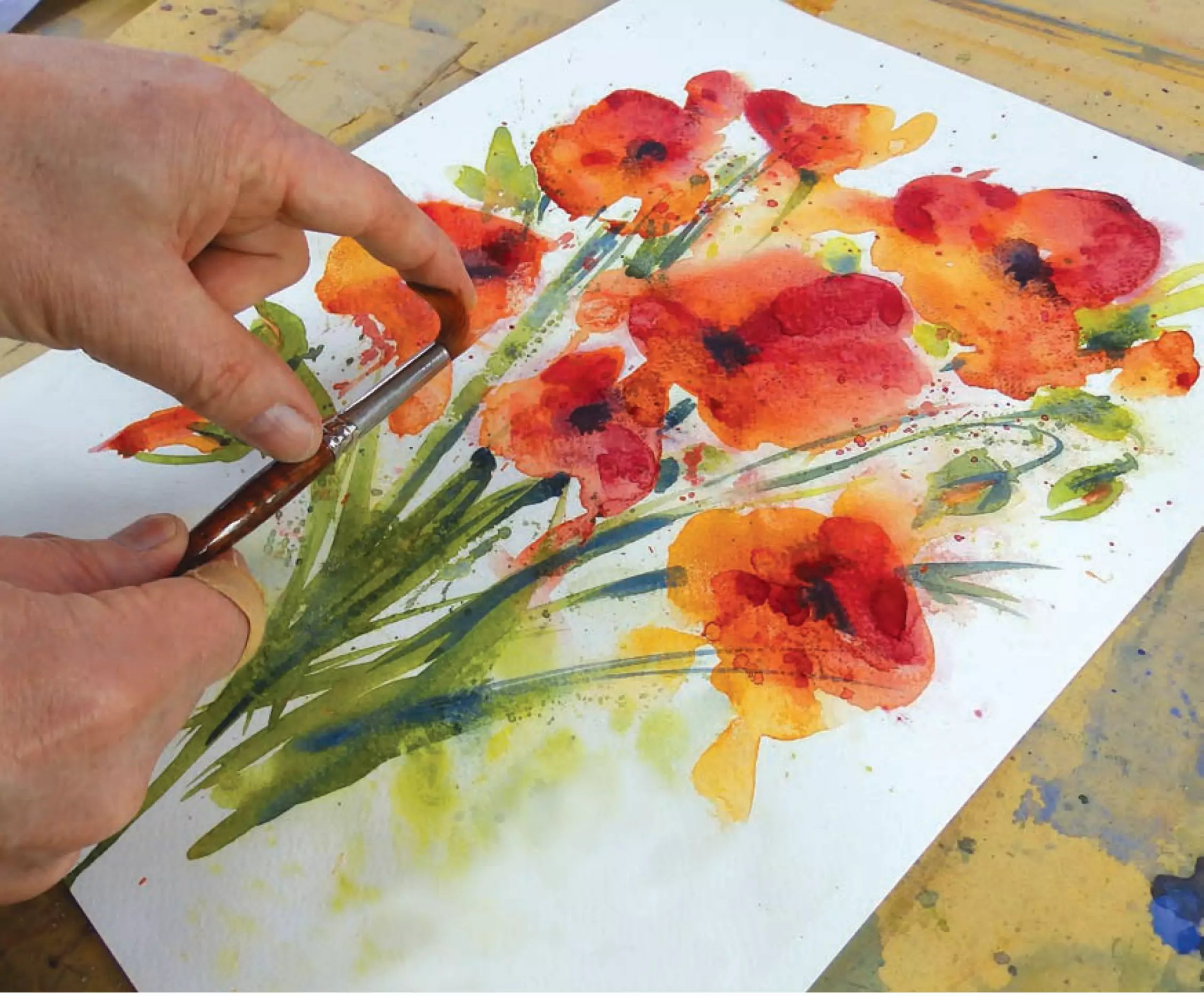
TIP

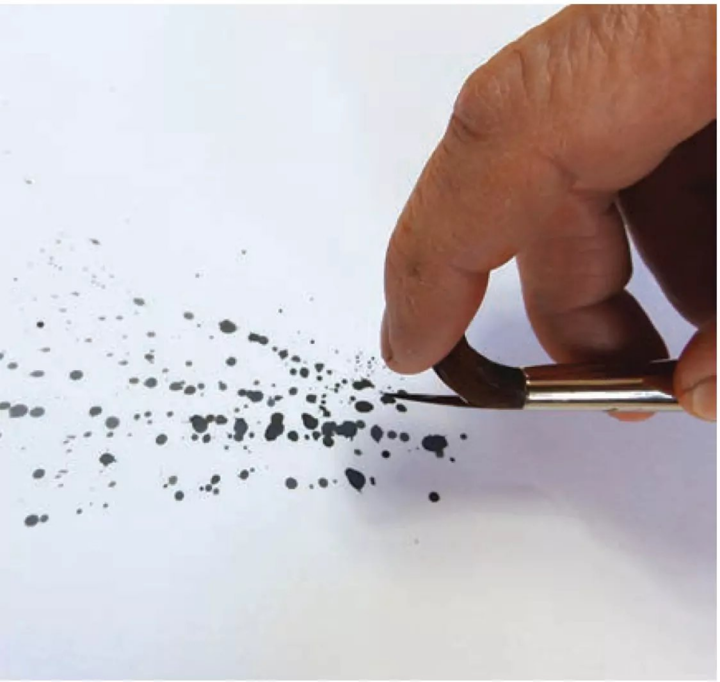
It’s not necessary to do any preliminary sketching for this exercise. Simply pick up your brush and start painting

STAGE 2

Mix up two shades of green, one with a 50% mix of yellow and blue and one with the same mix, but adding a touch of red to darken it. Paint in the stems quickly and loosely by holding your brush right at the end to give you less control and a more spontaneous stroke. While this is still wet, paint in the darker green right through the stems and underneath the poppies to create a shadow. Allow to dry.

Finally, paint in a little more detail with the darker green onto the dry paint to create some clearly defined shadows. Don’t be tempted to use a hairdryer to speed up the drying process, as letting the paint dry naturally can create some interesting backwashes. Always keep your brushstrokes to a minimum. Overworking can cause your washes to become muddy: remember, don’t fiddle and let the paint do the work! ▶

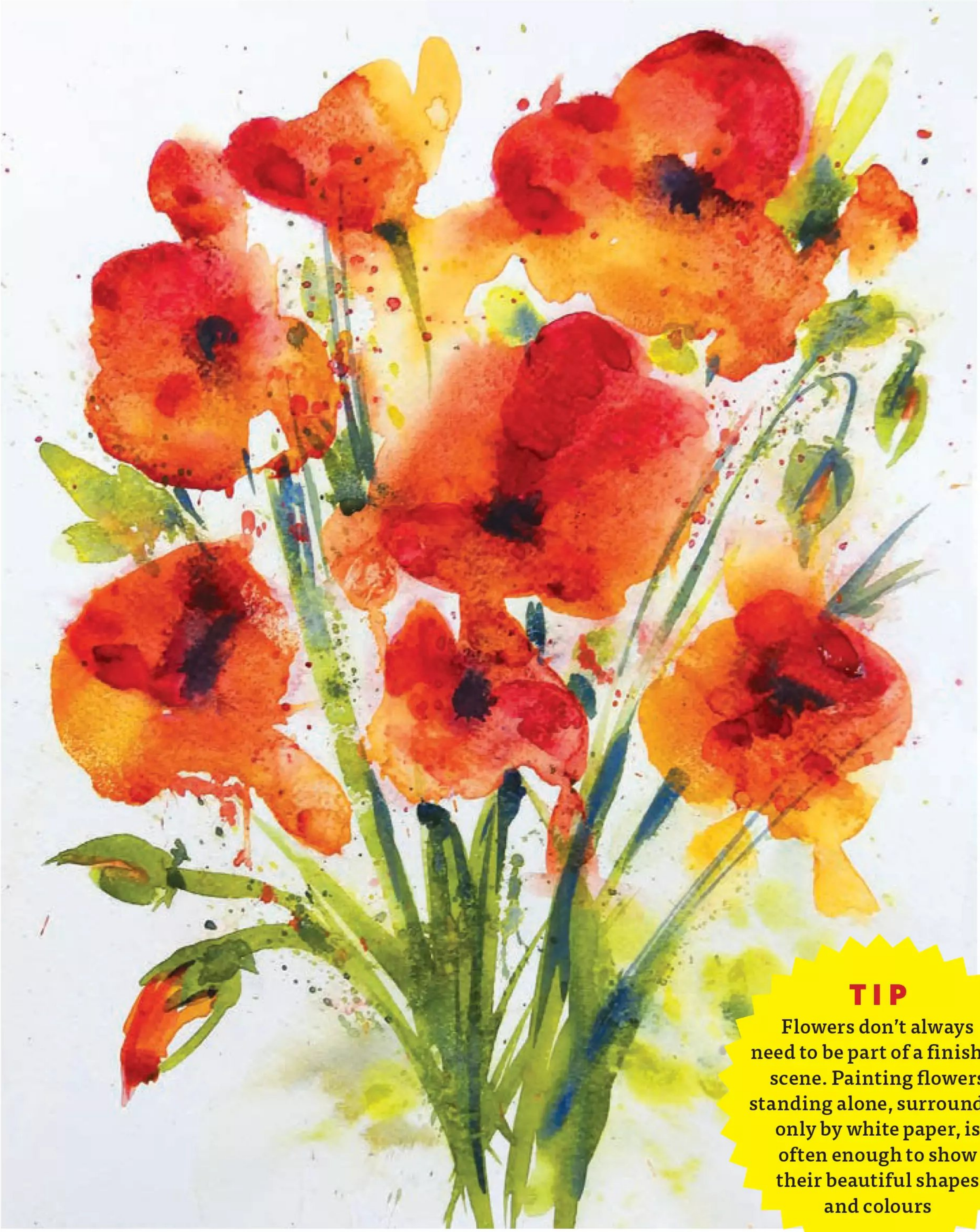




STAGE 3

Using your No. 12 brush, splatter in some red across the poppies and some green across the stems using the flick technique to add a bit of impact. To avoid the green splattering across the red of the poppies, you can mask them out using either some cheap paper or scrunched-up tissue.

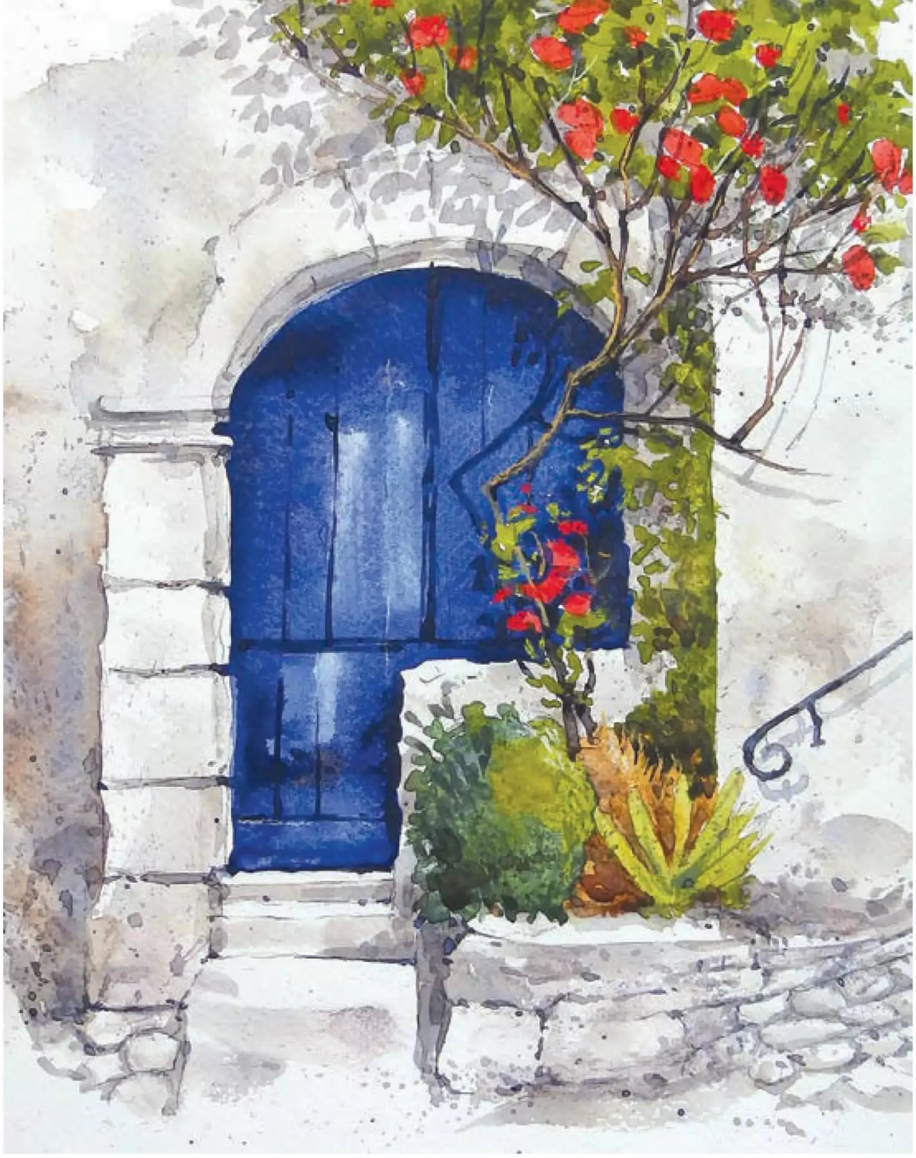
LEFT Before applying your splats directly to your painting, it's worth a few trial runs on a piece of scrap paper to get the right consistency.



TIP
Flowers don't always need to be part of a finished scene. Painting flowers standing alone, surrounded only by white paper, is often enough to show their beautiful shapes and colours

STAGE 4

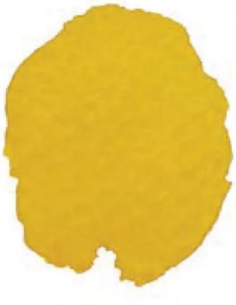
Finally, paint in the dark stamens by re-wetting each poppy with clean water and allowing it to soak in for about 30 seconds. Then, in the centre of each poppy, drop in a blob of Payne's Grey. This should create dark centres with natural soft edges. Mix another green made up of 70% yellow and 30% blue. Then re-wet the bottom right-hand corner of the paper with clean water and drop the green onto the damp paper to create the suggestion of some out-of-focus foliage. ◻



Blue door

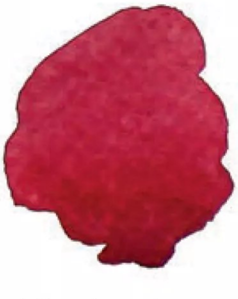
Here we look at how a quick sketch of a very simple feature, in this instance a doorway, can become an attractive watercolour painting

Colours needed



Cadmium Yellow

Cobalt Blue



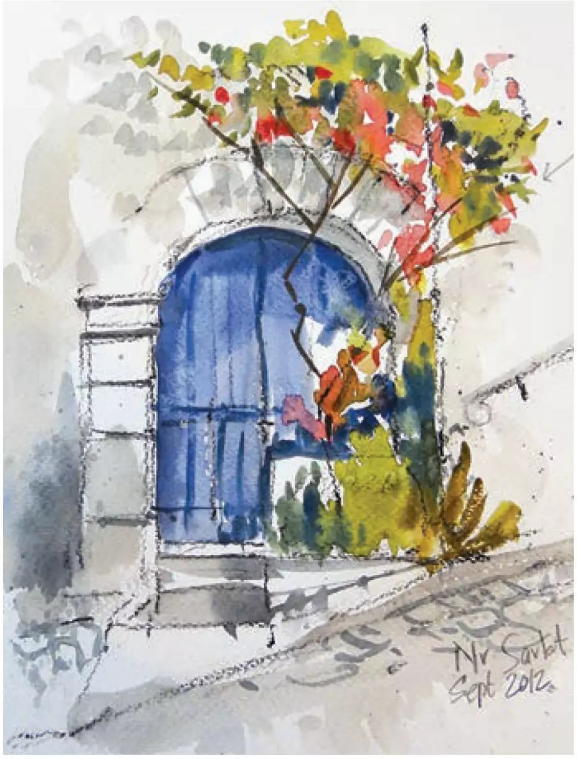
Alizarin Crimson

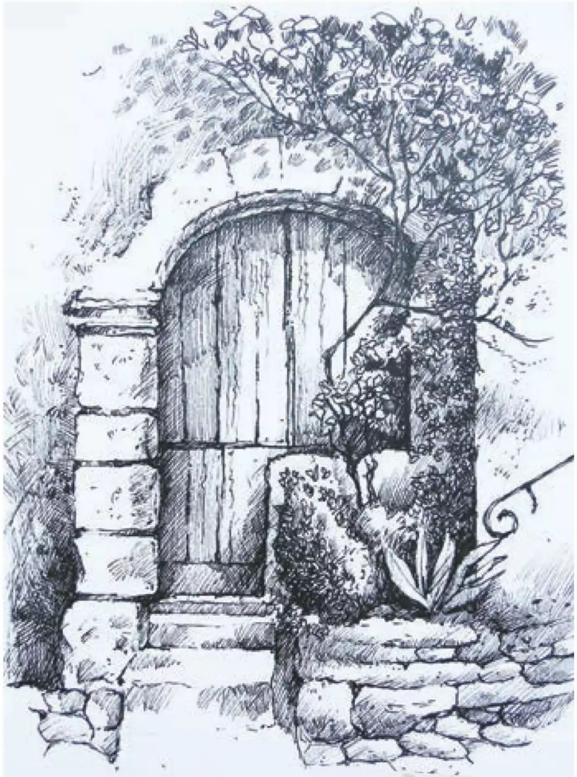
Payne's Grey

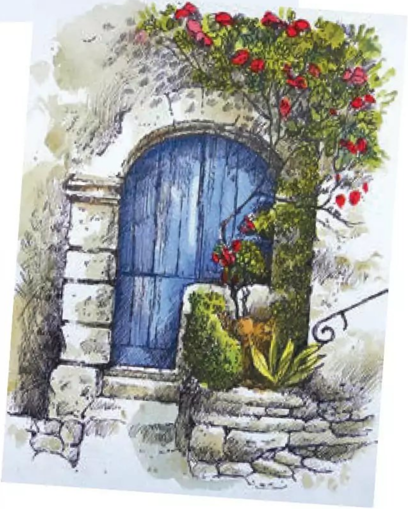
I came across this view, purely by chance, on a holiday in Sarlat in the Dordogne, France. I just happened to peer up a side street while at the market and instantly thought there was a painting to be had.

I could have taken a photograph for reference and painted it back at the studio, but sometimes it is better to paint a quick sketch so as to avoid trying to copy the photograph too realistically; this allows you to put your own interpretation on it. It was also such a beautiful day and I wanted to soak up the atmosphere. Instead of painting a sketch, many prefer to carry a pencil and pad with them and sketch a line drawing that they can fill with paint later.

I am often asked how important it is to see the pencil line in your finished painting and I always say it is entirely up to the individual. Some artists, who paint in a more realistic way, use their pencilwork purely as a guide to lay down their washes, whereas others prefer to see the line work as part of the painting. The pencilwork can be as prominent as you wish. Personally, I like to see some of the pencil lines showing through as I feel it can add character to the piece.



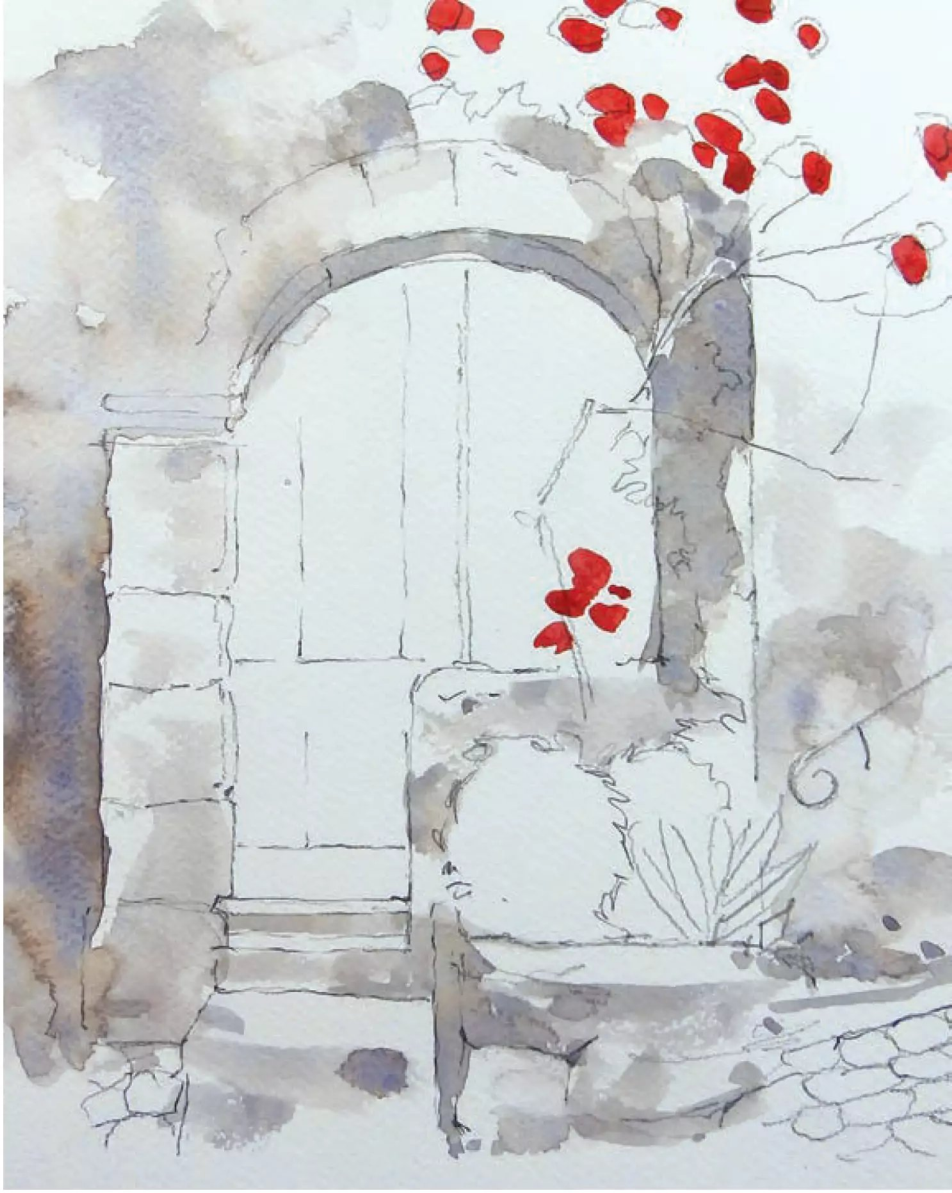


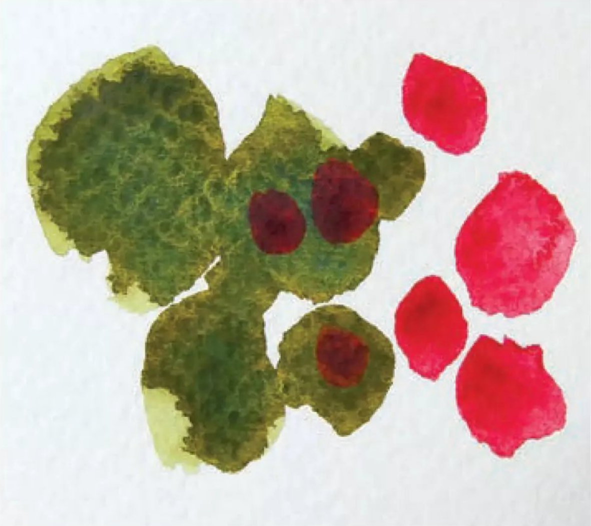


PEN AND WASH

You can take this a step further by painting in a 'pen and wash' style, introducing black ink. There are various ways to achieve this, using a permanent black marker or pen. Some artists like to put in the watercolour first then add the drawing work in black ink afterwards. I personally like to finish my drawing work so it stands alone as a finished monochromatic piece, introducing all the tonal values of light and shade with various short hatching strokes (closely spaced parallel lines). Once I have completed the hard work, I can sit back and relax, and simply paint in the watercolour. Some of my students have enjoyed working in this way to such a degree that they have continued using this as their preferred method of painting. ▶

TIP
Always keep your drawing work simple, allowing your paintbrush to do most of the work

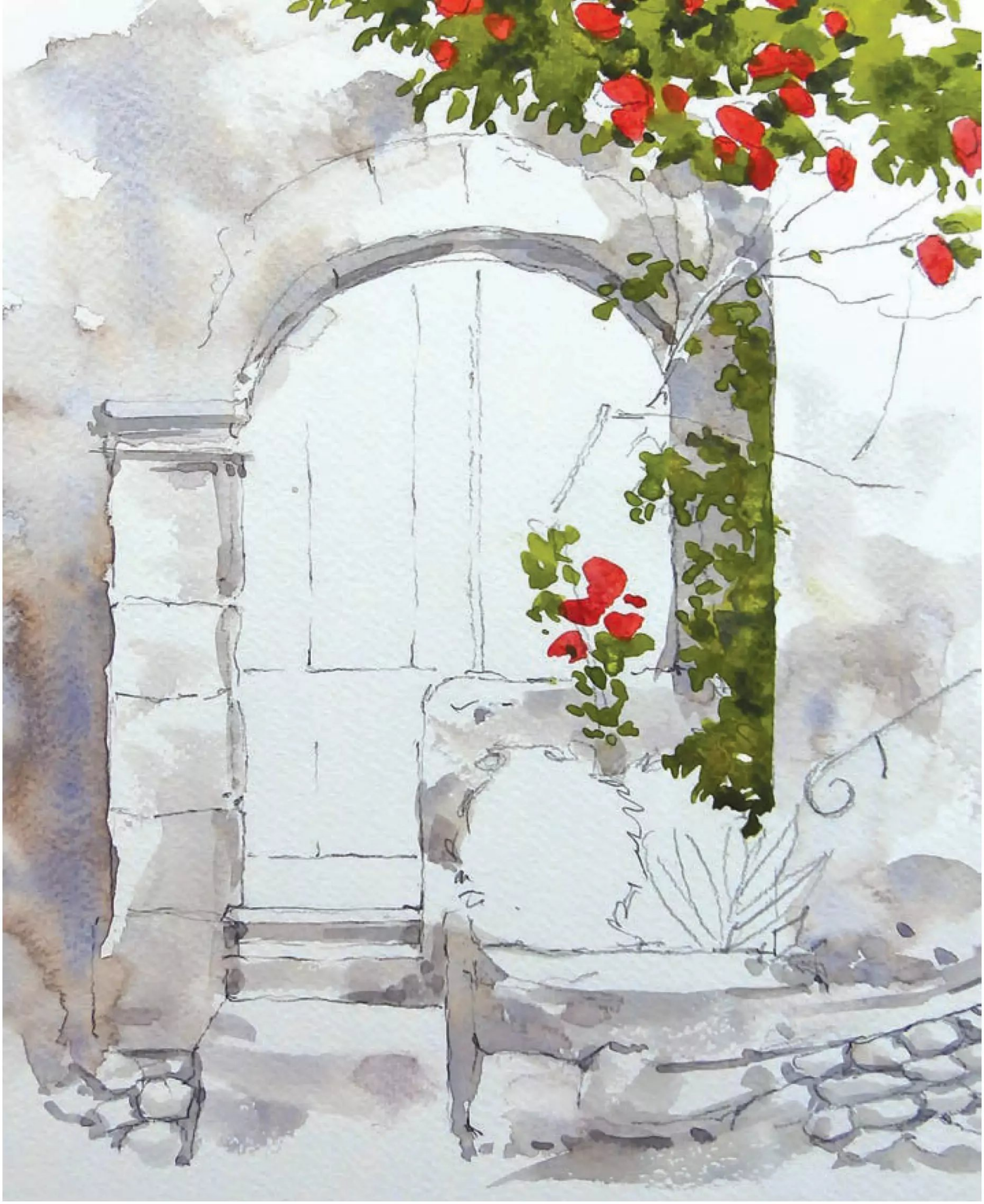




ABOVE You can see how important it is to paint your red onto white paper. Because of the transparency of the paint, the red looks much duller when painted on top of a green wash.

STAGE 1

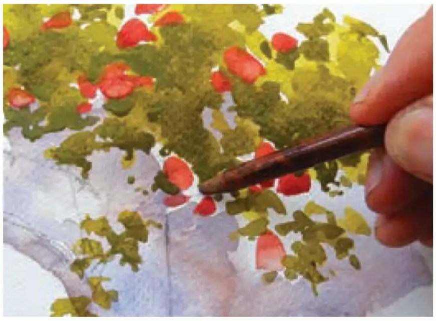
Start by doing a little loose drawing. Keeping your drawing work quite sketchy stops you from being too precise with your painting and avoids the 'paint-by-numbers' feel. Next, using your No. 12 brush, paint a few simple red blobs for the flowers. It's important these are painted first as we need to have bright white paper for the red to be strong. Then mix a grey, starting with a 50/50 mix of blue and red then mixing in a small amount of yellow. Paint this into the wall areas, using more colour in the shadow areas. While still wet, drop some clean water into the wash in a few small areas to create some interesting texture. Because you mixed the grey from the three colours, you can see the paint has separated, which gives a lovely granulation to the washes.



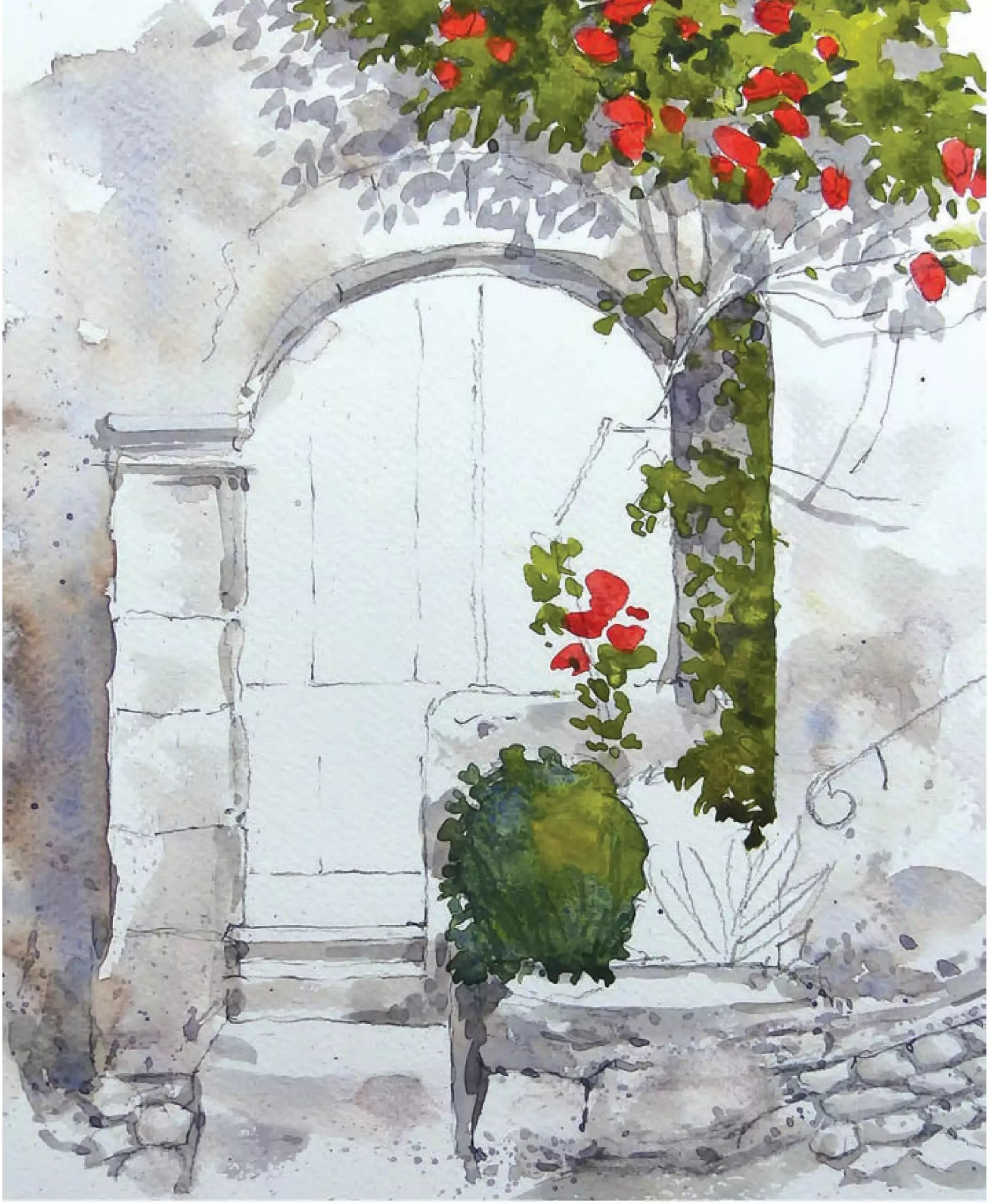
STAGE 2

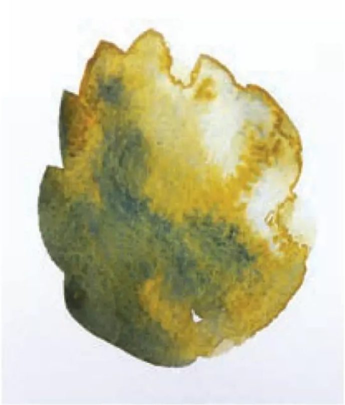
Next, mix a bright green using a 50/50 mix of blue and yellow and paint in the leaves and ivy. Using this same colour, mix into it some more blue and a touch of red to darken it and paint this into the wash before it has a chance to dry totally, to create some shadows in the foliage. Mix another grey (as in stage 1), but this time a little darker and, with your No. 6 brush, paint in some of the cobble details and shadows under the arch and on the steps.

Make sure you don't over-paint. Always leave areas of white paper showing through to give some extra sparkle.▶



ABOVE Use the end of your brush and work into the wet paint to create some harder edge details.

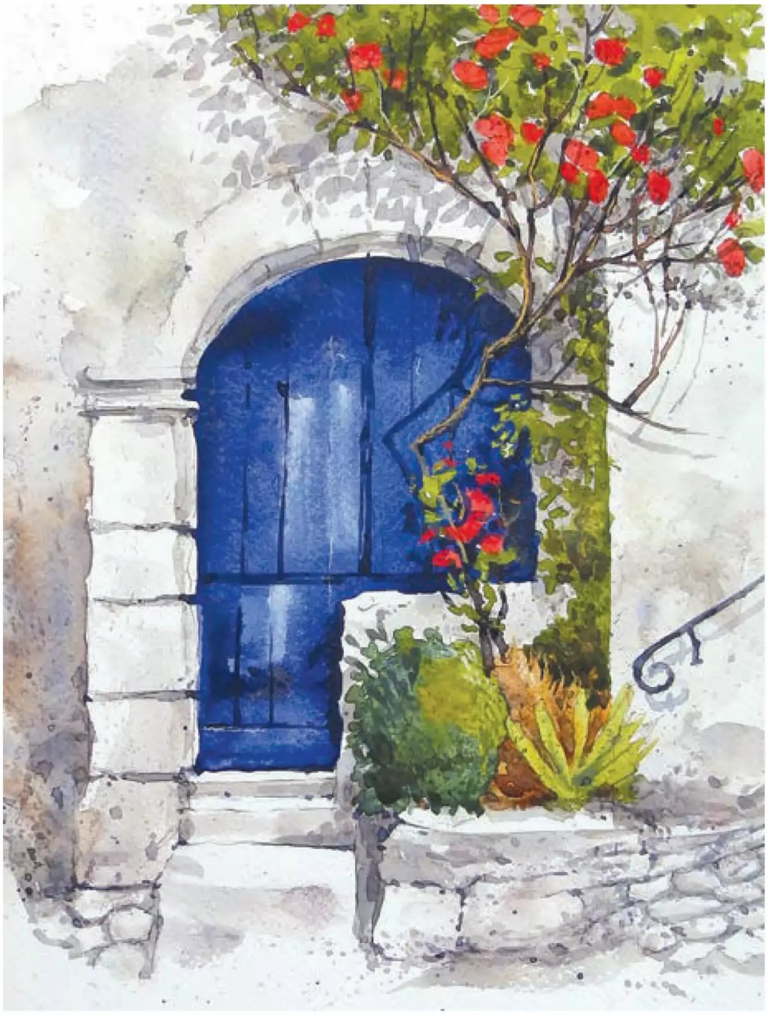


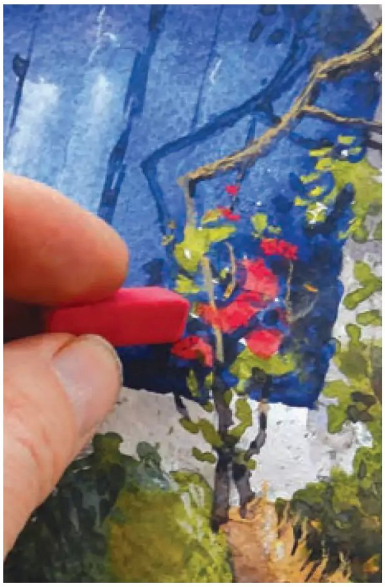


STAGE 3

Making sure all your washes are dry after stage 2, use grey again to paint in the shadow of the tree foliage and add some detail to the stones at the bottom. I also used the same colour to splatter some texture into the foreground and left-hand wall. Next, mix up another green but this time use more blue, and then paint in the bush in the centre. While still wet, I dropped in a more yellowy green to the right and with the end of my brush scored in some lines to create a bit of bush texture.

LEFT Dropping clean water directly into the wet wash will add interesting texture to the foreground foliage.





ABOVE If some of your flowers have become overpainted by the blue paint of the door, you can use a soft pastel to bring back the red detail.

STAGE 4

Pre-mix two colours for the door: a bright blue using lots of blue with a small touch of yellow, and a dark blue using blue, red and a touch of Payne's Grey to give it strength. Paint in the brighter blue, carefully working around the arch and foliage. While this is still wet, quickly paint in the darker blue along the top and sides of the door to create a shadow and then with a clean damp brush lift out the highlights in the door panels. Then mix a sandy colour using yellow and red with a tiny hint of blue to paint the second bush but leaving the paper white where the palm leaves are to be painted. When this is dry, paint in the small palm with a mix of mainly yellow but with a hint of blue. Paint in the branches using a dark brown mixed with all three colours, making sure you keep this to a minimum in the area where the leaves are. To finish off, mix a dark grey and paint the details in the door panels, the shadow of the tree on the door, the handrail and a few bits of foliage detail. It's so easy to overwork this final stage, so keep the details fresh and loose and to a minimum – always remember, less is more! ◻

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ACRYLICS

Acrylics can be a very satisfying and uplifting medium as the colours are so vibrant and fresh. You could say that acrylics bridge the gap between oils and watercolour as they exhibit characteristics of both these mediums. They are simple to use and have the added benefits of being odourless and easy to clean.

Acrylics are water-soluble and extremely versatile. They can be used to stain the canvas or, by using heavy body acrylics or gel mediums, they can be put down in very thick layers of paint. When used straight from the tube, the marks you make seem more like drawing than painting. Watercolour effects are easily achievable since water is the base for the pigment.

I will show you how to paint effectively with acrylics, but the main aim is to keep things simple. A lot can be achieved through the interpretation of a scene, figure or object by getting into the spirit of what you see in front of you rather than trying to copy it or adopting a false idea of what a painting should look like.

For the purposes of this book, I will demonstrate techniques based on photographic reference and sketches from life. However, the imagination is a powerful ally, so it is perfectly acceptable to edit your painting to remove or add features that might improve your composition. You can even work entirely from your imagination.

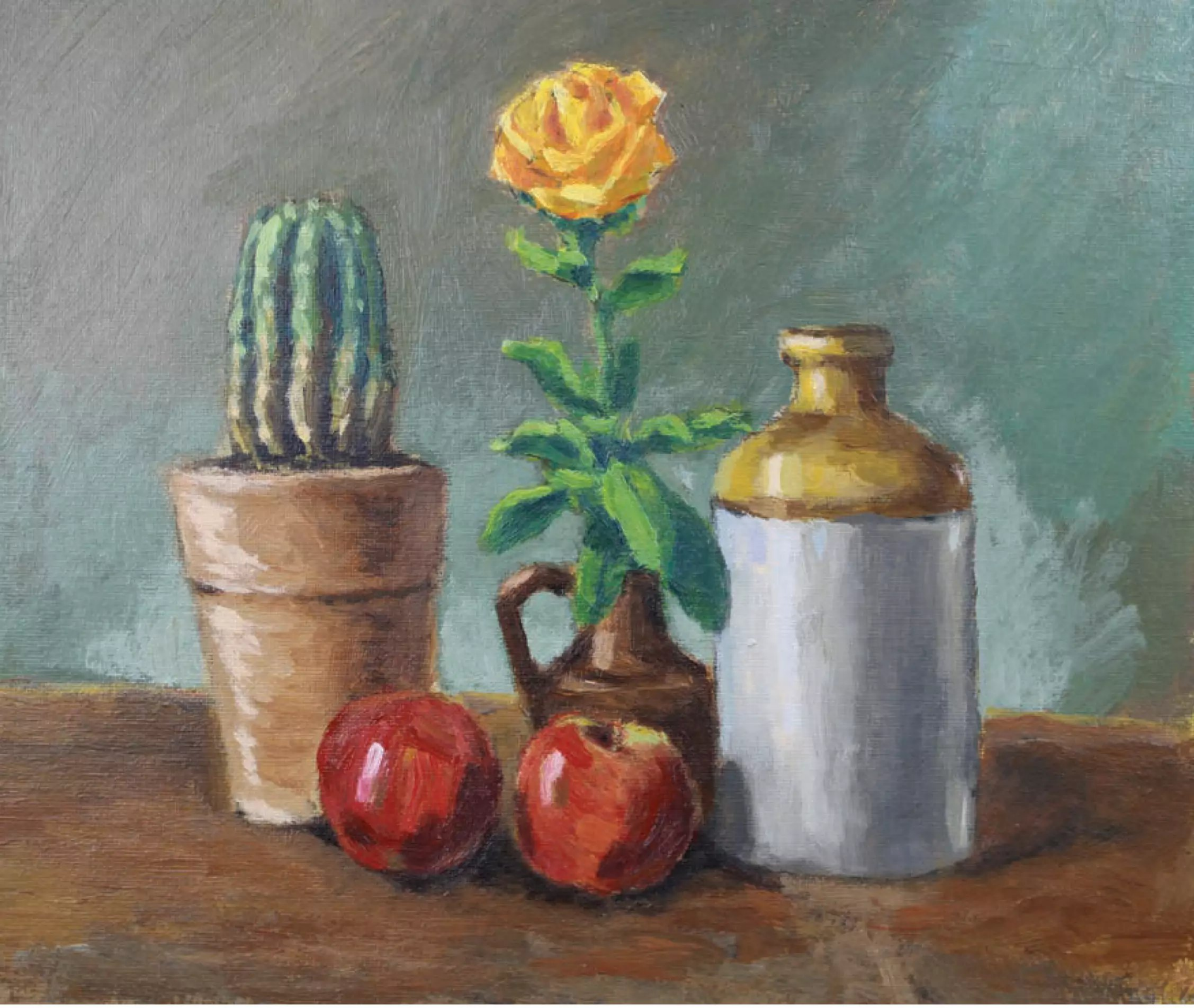
In the demonstrations, I only want to show what is achievable for the beginner: I don't want to show virtuoso performances that are not relevant to the student. But there are some basics that have to be observed.

Drawing skills, while not essential in every painting, do tend to convince the viewer that the artist has understood what he or she has seen. Also, there are acknowledged steps that can be said to have a certain artistic pedigree. You may have heard of underpainting, blocking in, complementary colours and so on. All these techniques are tools to help you to express what you have in mind.

For this book, I have made the creation of a picture fit into stages. This approach is useful as it shows the thought processes of the artist. Yet a lot goes on that can't be shoehorned into stages. Some artists paint from painstaking preparatory drawings and then go back and re-paint whole passages, while Caravaggio, Van Gogh and Velázquez, for instance, went straight into a painting with little or no preparation.

I begin with a series of techniques that I would advise you to practise before embarking on the projects. The six projects are exercises that demonstrate the versatility of acrylics and each study is only intended as an inspiration for the beginner. I suggest that you work on them in sequence, taking your time to develop and improve your skills. I hope that you take pleasure in your first steps with acrylics and are proud of your achievements.

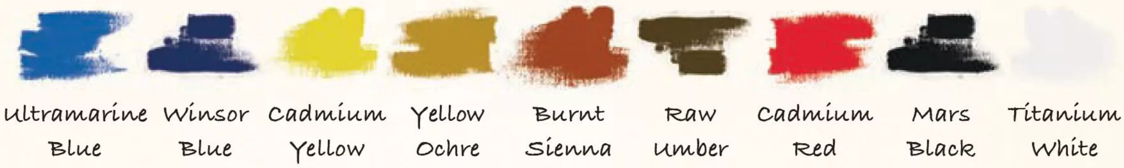
Adrian.

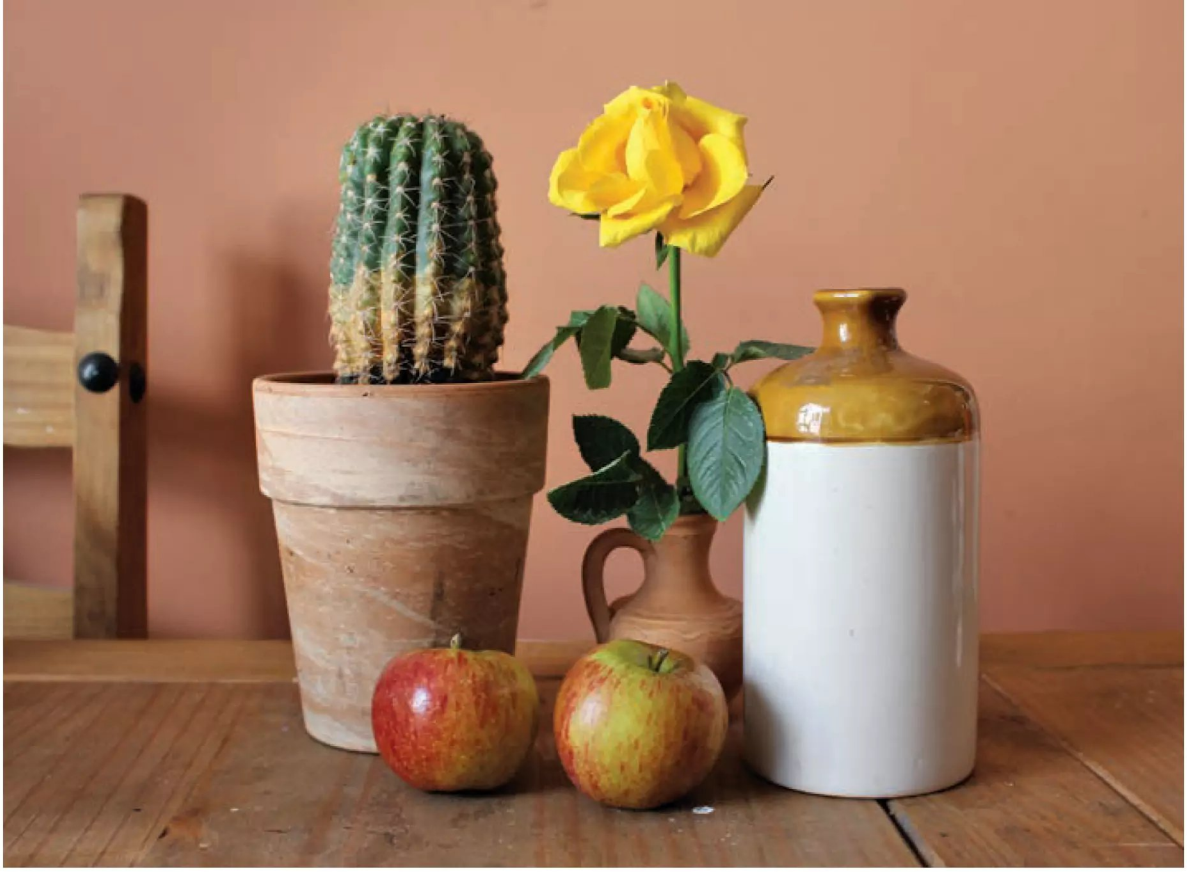


Still life

This project explores the qualities of different textures within one painting. You will learn how to achieve a balanced composition both in colour and form by using the technique of underpainting

Colours needed


Ultramarine Blue
Winsor Blue
Cadmium Yellow
Yellow Ochre
Burnt Sienna
Raw Umber
Cadmium Red
Mars Black
Titanium White

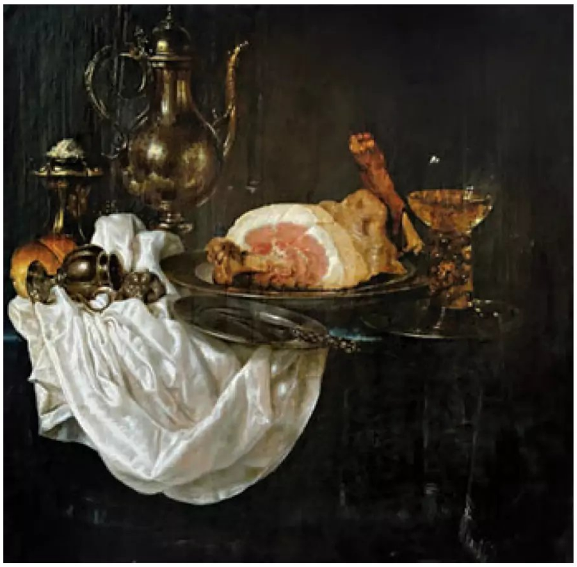


Still-life painting has a long history; it was often a means for an artist to show off his or her ability to tackle varied textures and lighting effects. This kind of painting sometimes had an allegorical meaning as well as showing a mastery of technique; it reached its peak with the Dutch Golden Age of painting in the 17th century.

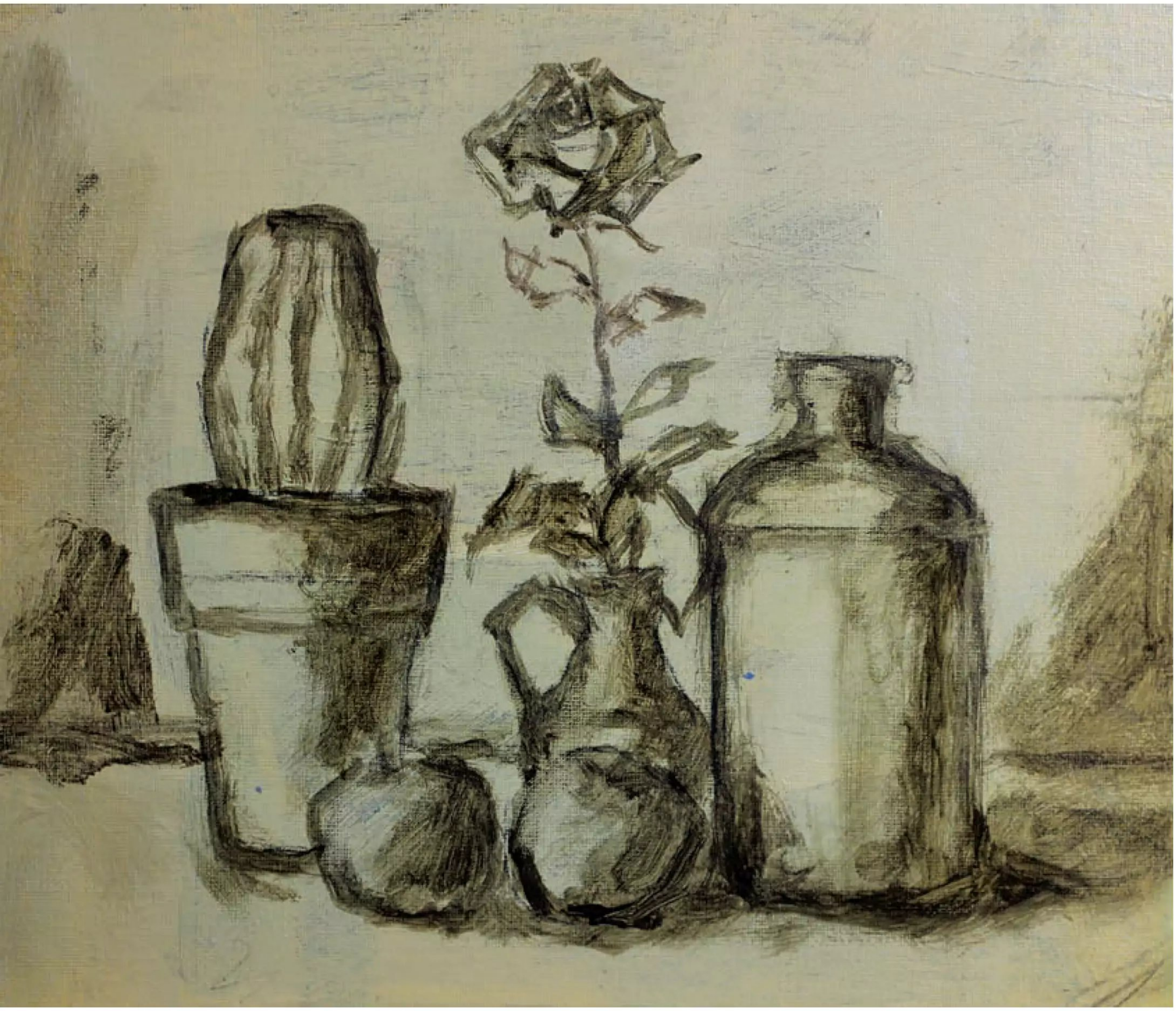
When arranging a still life, lighting is quite important since it affects the mood of the picture. A still life that is bathed in an even light will have a very different mood to one that has a lot of dark areas with a few highlights. There is an Italian word from the 17th century that sums up the dramatic effect of light and shadow: 'chiaroscuro'. This means 'bright and dark', and can be seen in the painting Still Life with Ham, Silver Jug and Roemer by the Dutch painter Willem Claeszoon Heda. Notice how the background is almost completely dark, which emphasises the bright objects in the foreground.

REFERENCE PHOTO

I chose just five objects for this painting, but within those objects, there is a range of textures. The prickly cactus is in an earth-coloured plant pot, the flower is in a slightly more glazed pot, the apples are shiny spheres and the jug is a highly glazed vessel of two colours. The background is a plain terracotta colour. I changed the background in my picture to a blue-green colour because I wanted the yellow rose, red apples and especially the plant pot to stand out. I also increased the height of the rose stem to improve the composition. All these things are possible when you are painting because you are the artist and therefore the one who decides what to put in and what to leave out. ▶



ABOVE Willem Claeszoon Heda, *Still Life with Ham, Silver Jug and Roemer*, 1656.



TIP

A still life can be just a few pieces of fruit on a table or an array of the most varied objects you can think of, from seashells to a vase or a toy aeroplane. Bear in mind that the more complex the composition, the harder it is to arrange without it looking like a jumble sale!

STAGE 1

For this stage, I have chosen to use a round hog-hair brush to sketch in the composition. This method of painting is called ‘underpainting’ and is a really effective way of starting out. The underpainting provides a wonderful tonal guide to follow throughout the painting process.

For the coloured ground, I used a mixture of Yellow Ochre, Titanium White and Raw Umber. For the underpainting I used Raw Umber with a little Mars Black, diluted with water, to draw the shapes and composition. Try to get as much tone in the first underpainting as possible without obliterating the background.

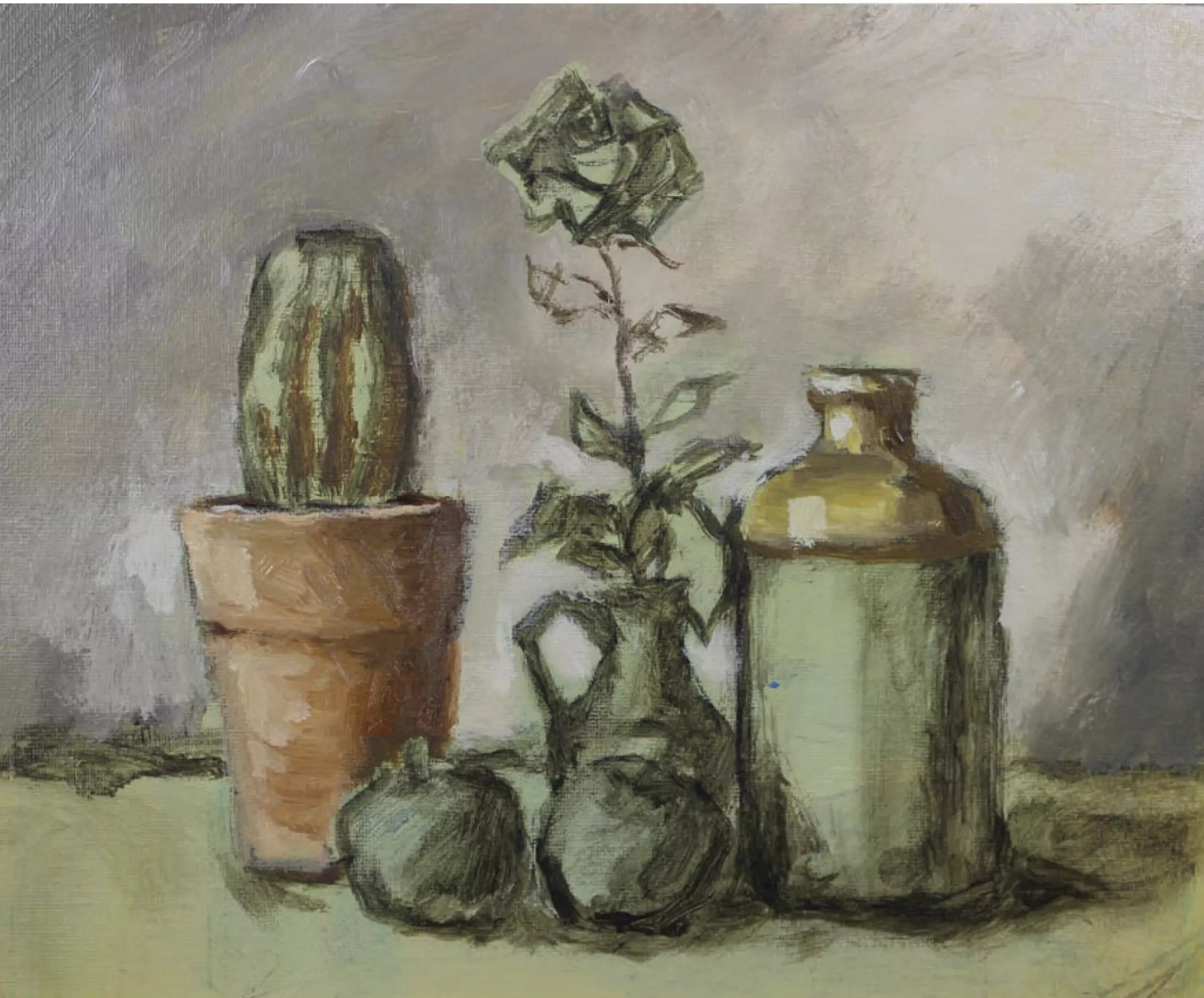
TIP

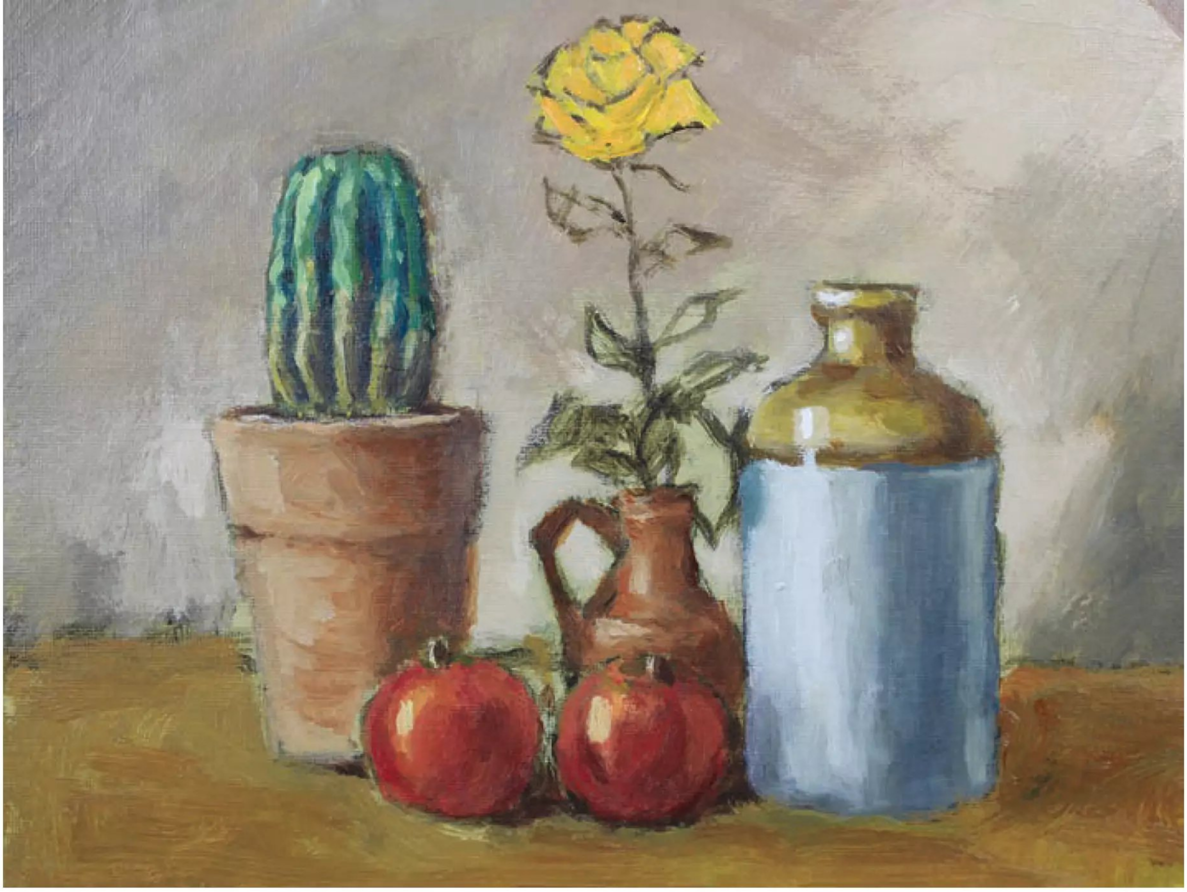
Painting with an easel allows you to stand back from your work as you go along. This helps you to get an overall view of the composition, colours and tones and how they are working together. If you want a more radical view, look at your work in a hand mirror. It is startling how different it looks and how much easier it is to see unsatisfactory passages of paint

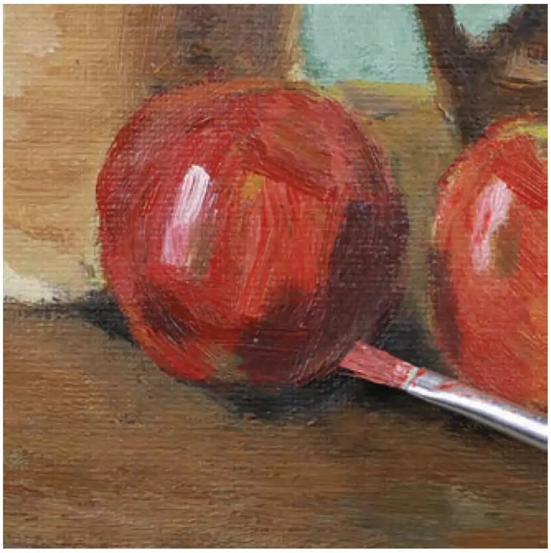
STAGE 2

Establish some colours on your objects. For the plant pot, I used Burnt Sienna and Titanium White, and tried to get as much texture in the painting as I could by loading my brush and painting in short, 'flaky' strokes to get the crusty feel of baked clay. I alternated between a round and a flat hog-hair brush for this stage. The plant pot is a dull texture, so the transition from light to dark is muted. The apples and the jug, on the other hand, have strong transitions and have highlights on them to give the impression of glossy surfaces.

The top of the jug is painted in Yellow Ochre and Raw Umber. The Raw Umber is cooler and darker than the ochre so is used on the shadow side. The highlight is Yellow Ochre and Titanium White. ▶







ABOVE Not all shadows are dark! Light can be reflected from other objects onto the shadow. Add an area of lighter tone along the contour of an object to make the shape more convincing.

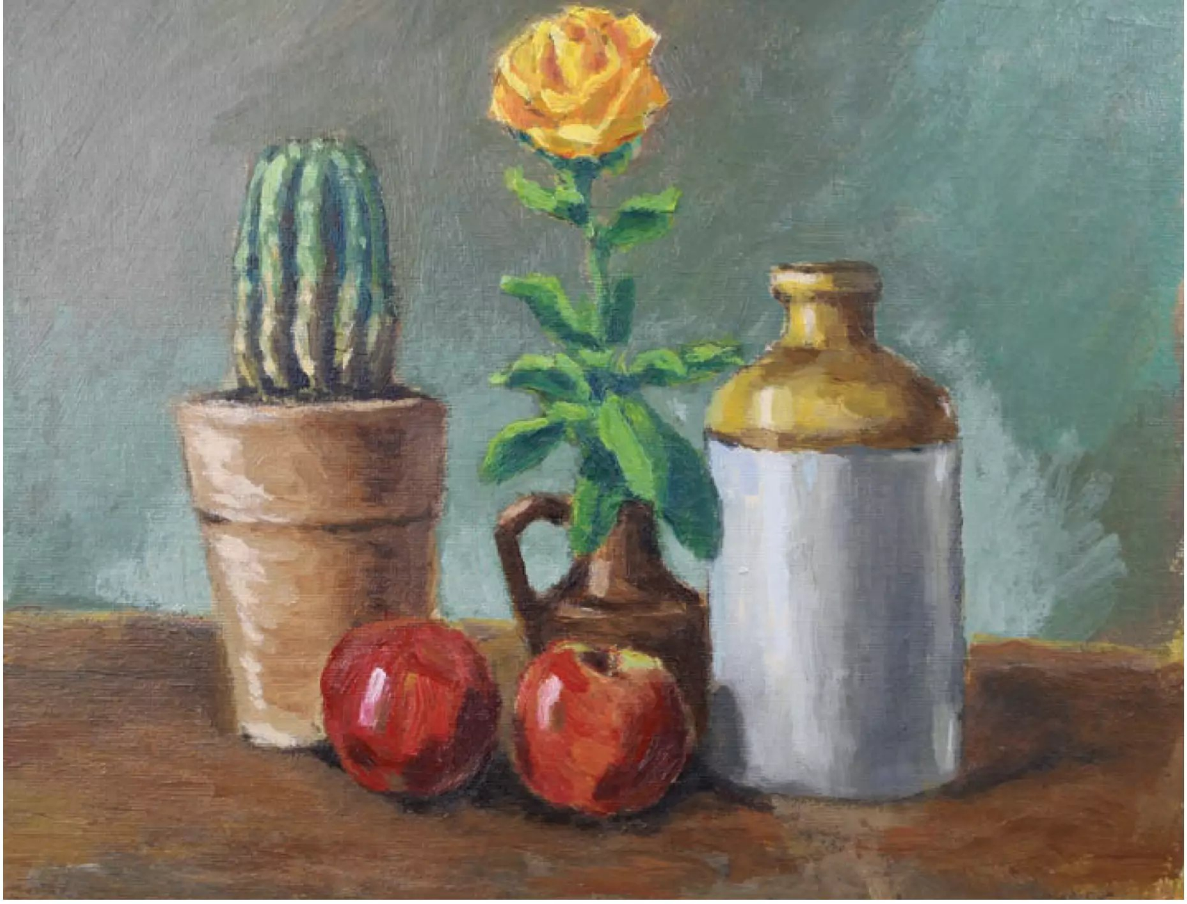
STAGE 3

The lower half of the jug is a different colour to the top but equally shiny. To give the impression of height, I have made my paint strokes go vertically instead of horizontally. The colour is a mix of Mars Black and Titanium White. Try to add lighter tones into the darker side to give the impression that light is being picked up by this reflective object from other sources in the room.

The cactus is painted as a series of vertical ridges. The green top part of the cactus is Ultramarine Blue plus yellow for the mid-tones; the same mix but with a little more Winsor Blue is used for the shadows. Add Titanium White to the colour you mixed for the mid-tones for the highlights. For the lower half of the cactus, use Raw Umber instead of Ultramarine Blue in your mix.

For the head of the rose, I used Cadmium Yellow, followed by a mix of Cadmium Yellow and a little Cadmium Red to make a light orange for modelling the petals. For the apples, I used Cadmium Red and Cadmium Yellow for the main tones, mixing more yellow into the red for the brighter side of the apples.

This stage and the final one are best done while the paint is beginning to dry so you can blend the colours more effectively.

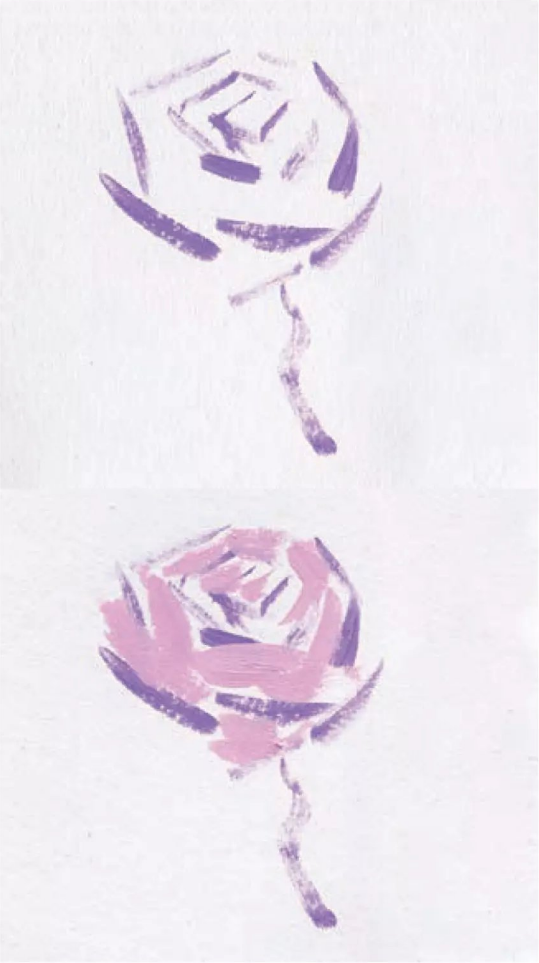


STAGE 4

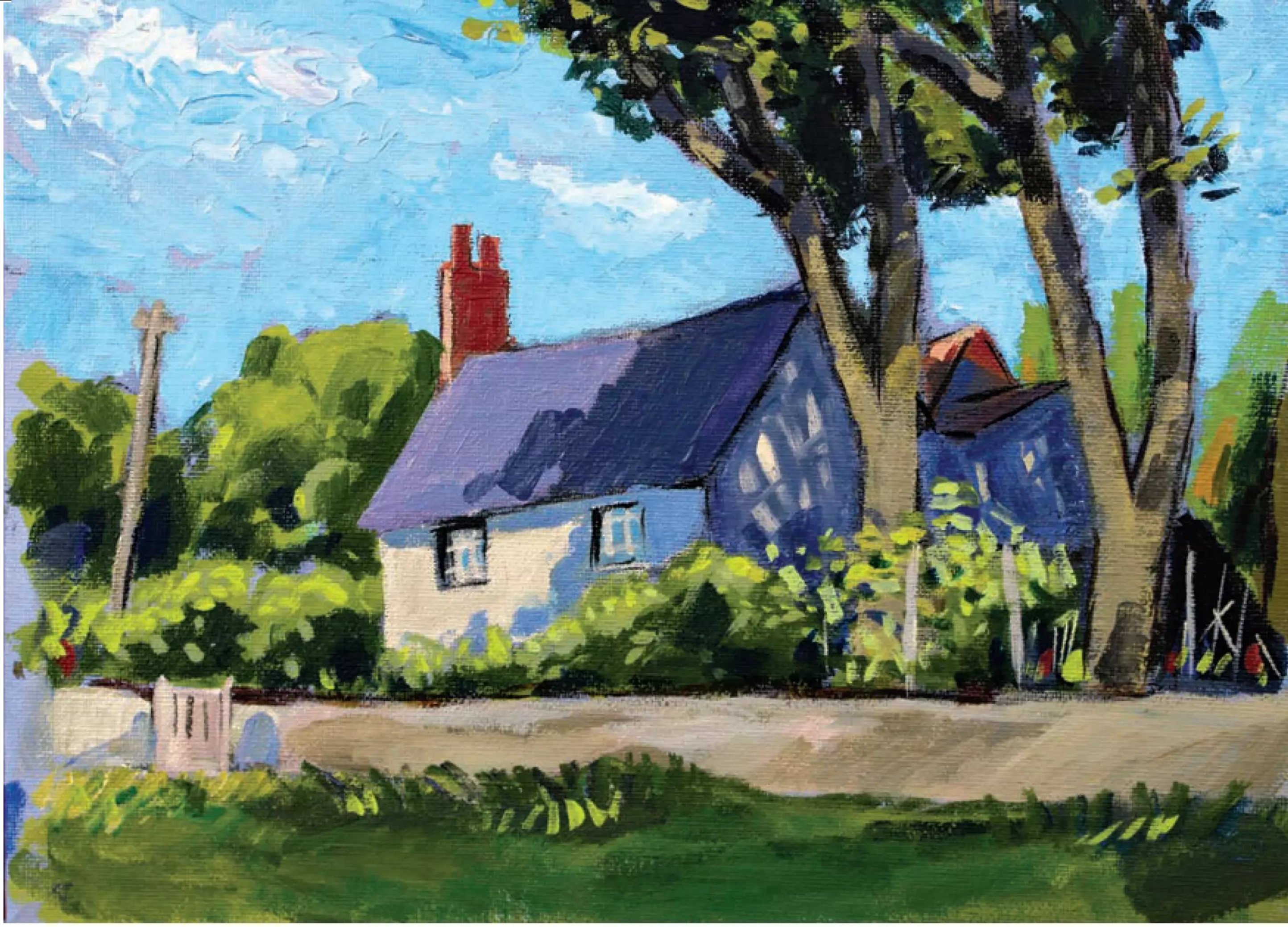
To deepen the colour of the flower, add more Cadmium Red to the orange you made in stage 3, and put it into the darkest parts of the petals. Add Titanium White to the Cadmium Yellow on your palette and paint highlights on tops of the petals. Put tiny amounts of green into the yellow parts of the petals to capture the reflections off the green leaves.

The jug in which the flower stands is treated much like the flowerpot but with more of a shine in the treatment – that is, with stronger contrasting highlights.

The background is made up of various shades of green and blue; it is a good idea to lighten this mixture towards the table to make the objects stand out against the table and the darker upper half of the picture. The table itself is made up of Burnt Sienna with Mars Black and Raw Umber scumbled in for the texture of the shadows. □



RIGHT Flowers are very complex structures, so it is best to simplify them as much as possible. A rose is a series of small folded sheets that become more closely confined towards the centre. Try to paint it as a concentric design and then add the modelling.

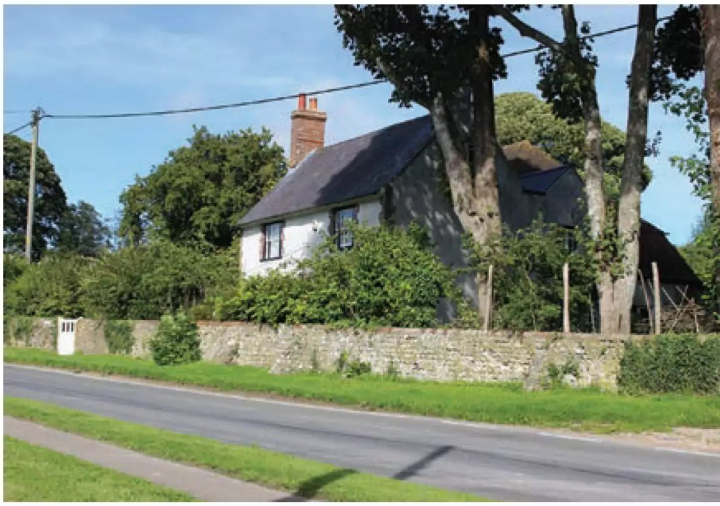


Summer cottage

This project will show you how to paint a view of a cottage from a low angle with the effects of sunlight on walls and foliage. You will learn how to mix colours so they stay bright and how to build up shapes that represent foliage and architecture

Colours needed

- Ultramarine Blue
- Winsor Blue
- Cadmium Yellow
- Yellow Ochre
- Burnt Sienna
- Raw Umber
- Cadmium Red
- Mars Black
- Titanium White



REFERENCE PHOTO

This painting is from a photograph I took one summer's day in Sussex, England. As you can see, the finished painting differs from the photograph in many ways. That is not a bad thing. In fact I think it's the reverse! If you can use your imagination to build on your reference photograph, all the better.

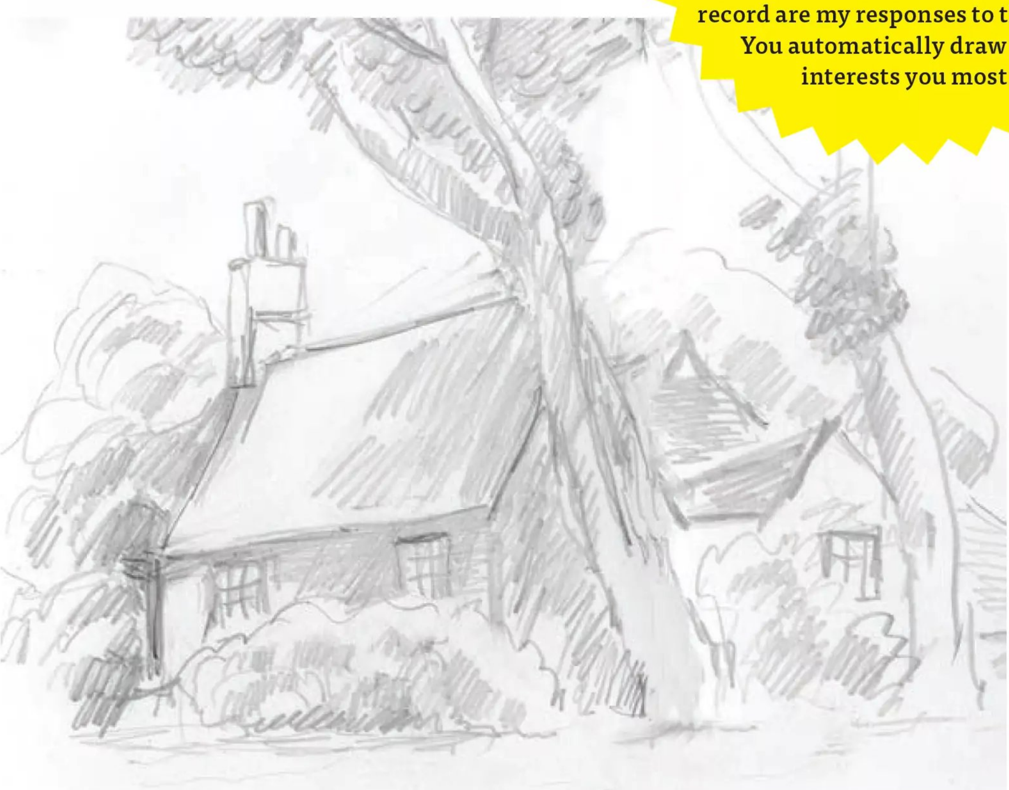
In the later stages, don't be afraid to add detail or re-paint areas as you see fit. The danger comes when you start 'fiddling'. There is a big difference between editing and fiddling. I think you instinctively know when you have gone too far in trying to change what you have. Very often the first strokes are the best.

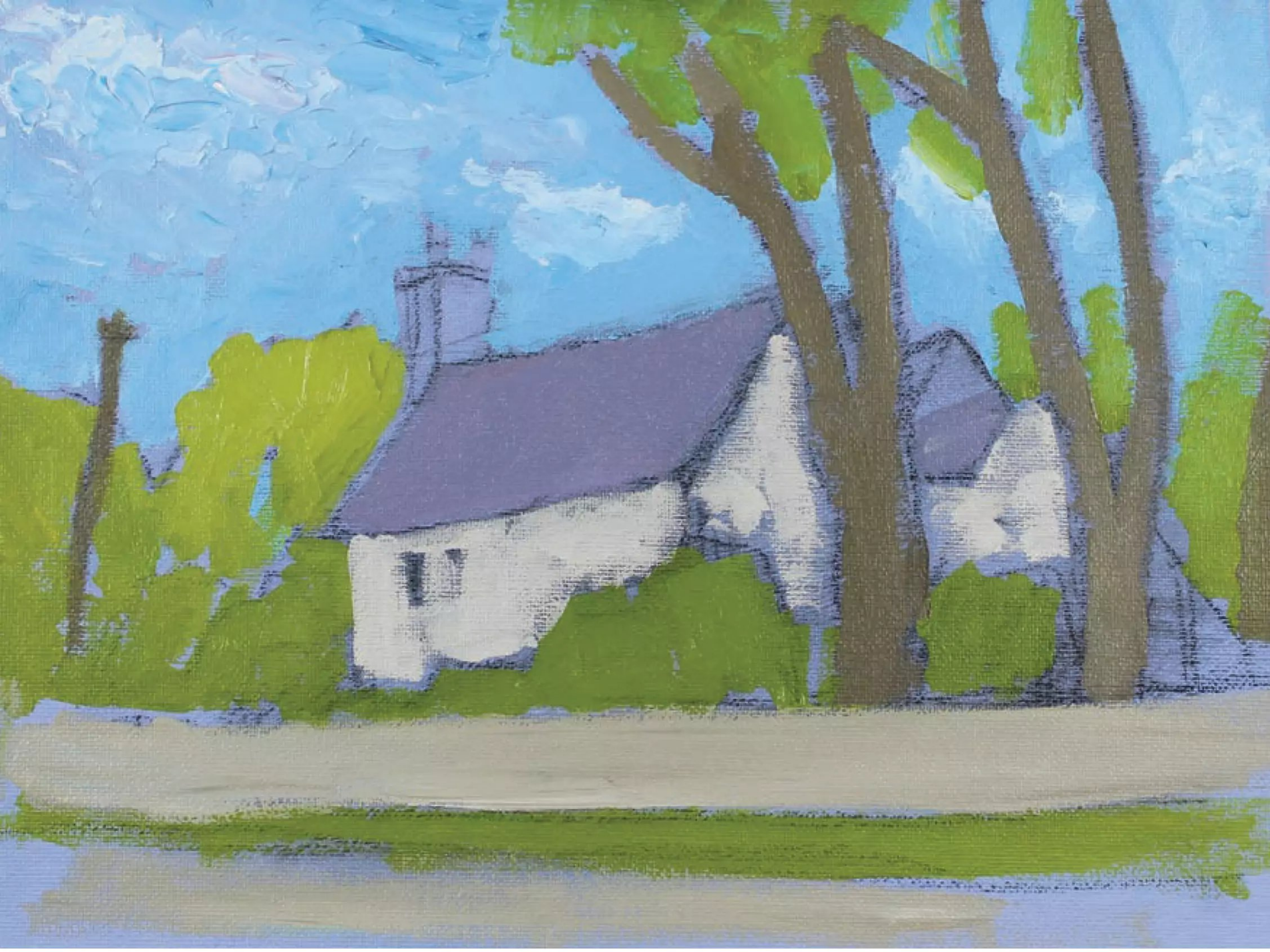
PHOTOGRAPHY AND SKETCHING

You know, of course, that the camera lies. There is no such thing as 'reality' in a photo. A camera has one 'eye' and, depending on the focal length of the lens, you can get wildly different results of the same view. A 28mm lens will give a totally different view from a 55mm lens. It's the same with your eyes. Close one eye and look at a scene and do the same with the other – the scene shifts. ▶

TIP

Doing a sketch on the spot, no matter how quickly, can give you an alternative perspective that can be very helpful when you paint from the photograph at home. This drawing was done in a small sketchbook in a few minutes while I was sitting by the side of the road. It doesn't have a great deal of information in it, but what it does record are my responses to the scene. You automatically draw what interests you most





TIP

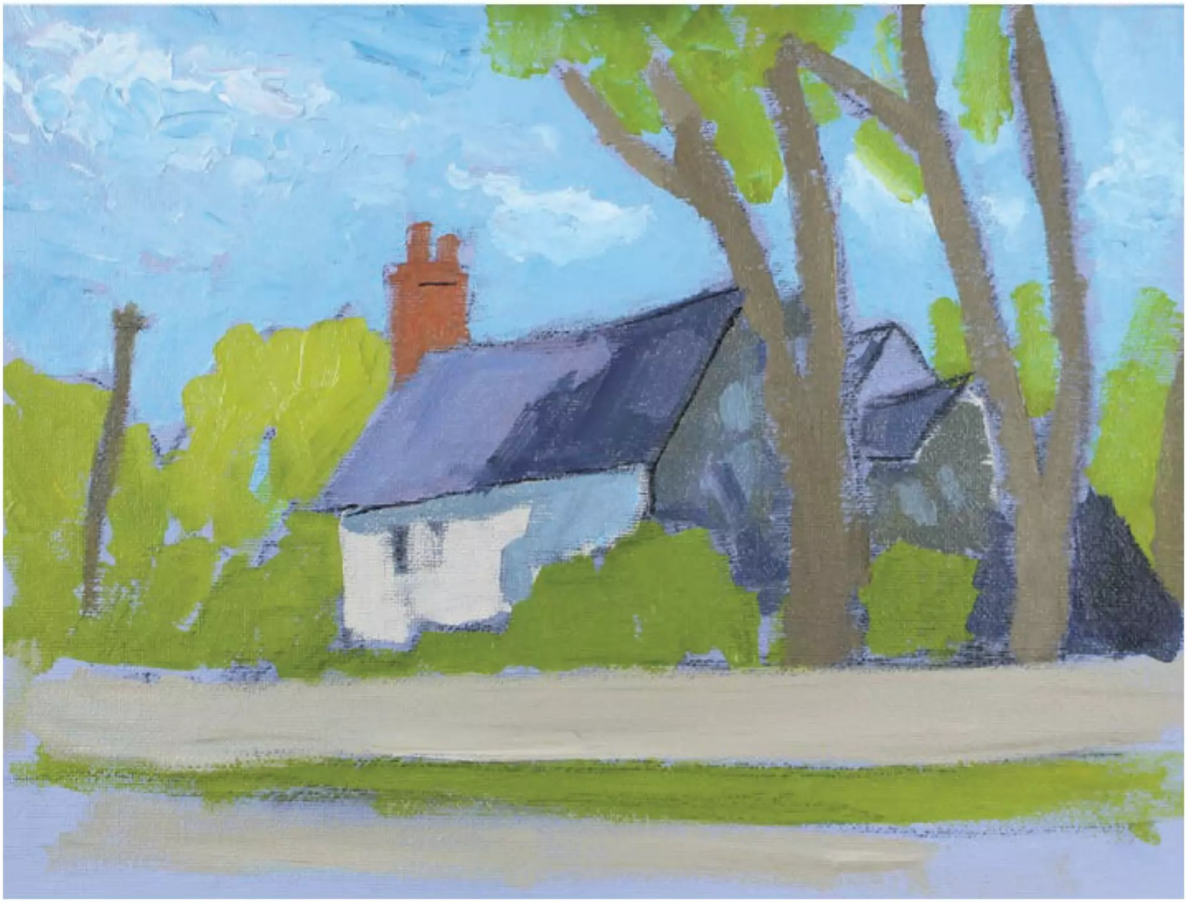
If you compare the line of the roof in the photograph with the same area in my painting, you can see that the line of the roof dips in the middle. Making straight lines a little crooked can add charm to older houses

STAGE 1

Start by making a sketch on your canvas. In this case I sketched lightly with a soft pencil on to a ground colour of Ultramarine Blue mixed with a little Titanium White. Don't worry about smudging this drawing when you are painting; the paint will cover up any initial marks if it is applied thickly enough.

Now block in the main colour elements of the picture. Mix Winsor Blue and Titanium White and use a bristle brush to thickly apply the paint to the whole sky area. Warm up parts of the sky by adding a small amount of Cadmium Red into your blue. Add some clouds by applying Titanium White with your palette knife, using dabbing and skidding motions. Let the white paint mix freely with the blue of the sky but try and leave the tops of the clouds as white as possible.

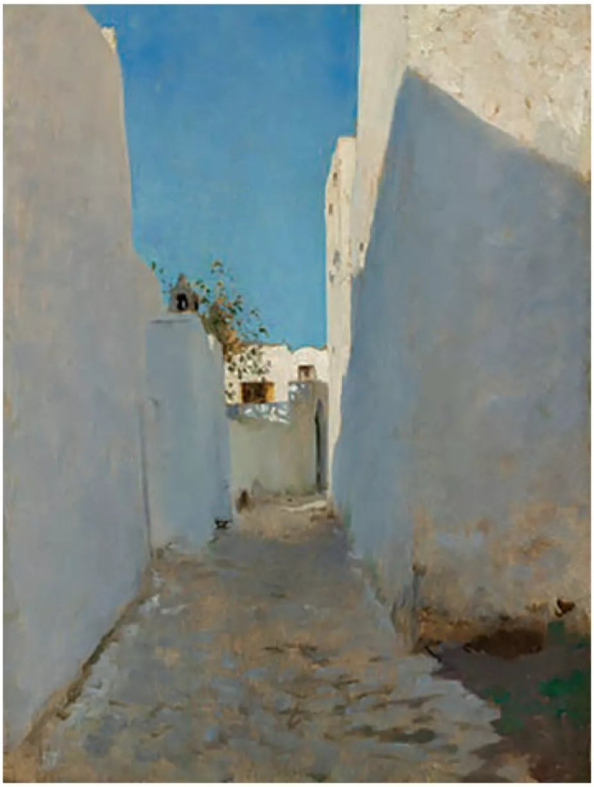
Using a mixture of Ultramarine Blue, Cadmium Yellow and a touch of Winsor Blue, block in all of what you see as green in the picture. Next, paint in the trunks of the trees and the telegraph pole with a mixture of Raw Umber and Titanium White. The wall in front of the cottage is the same mix but with much less Raw Umber. The roof is a mixture of Ultramarine Blue, a little Cadmium Red and Titanium White. Finally, paint in the walls of the cottage with Titanium White and a tiny amount of Raw Umber to cool it down a little.



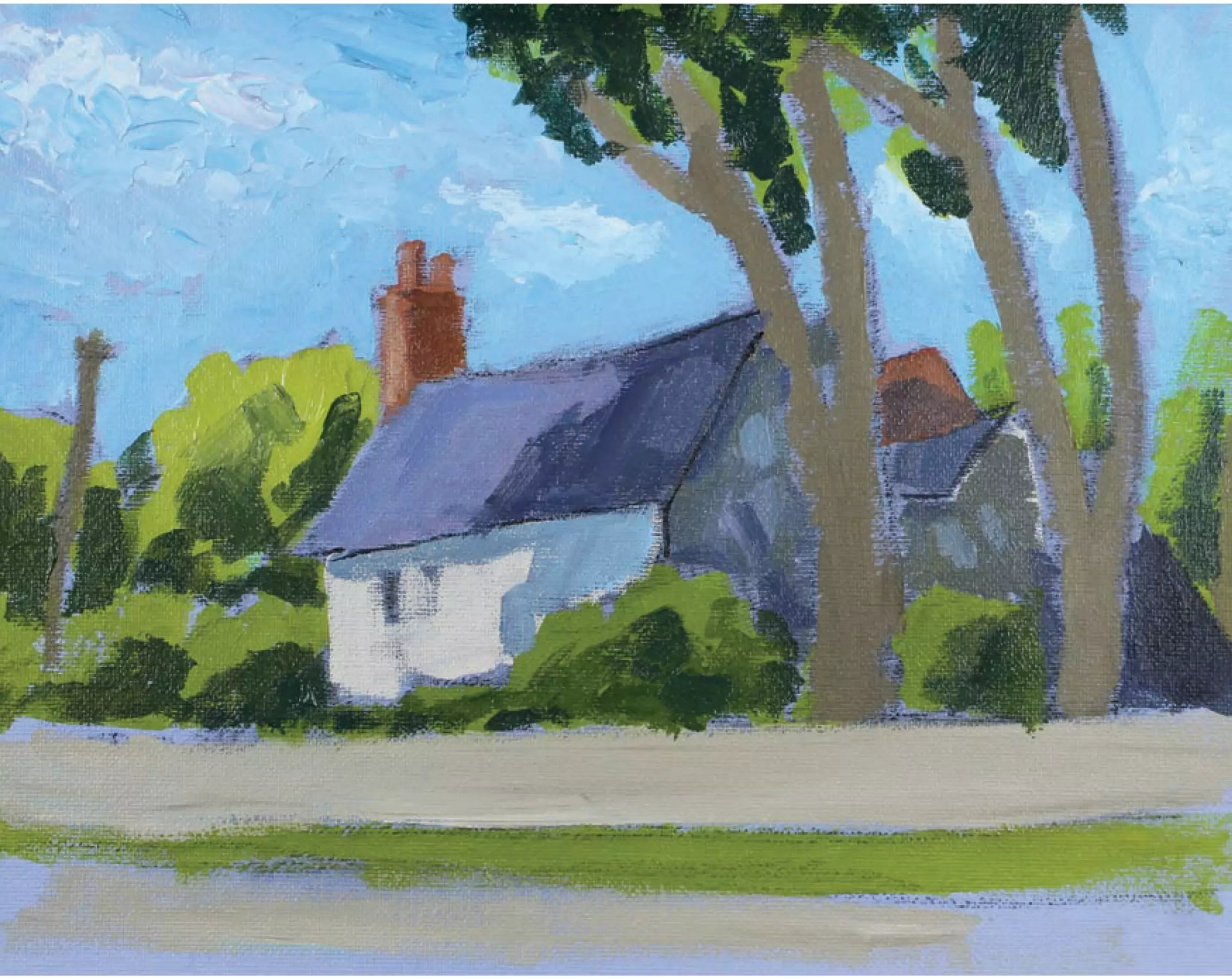
STAGE 2

Here we are going to think about shadows. There is a strong shadow cast by the tree on the cottage roof and behind the tree trunks. These shadows are made by mixing Winsor Blue with a little Cadmium Red cooled down with a dash of Raw Umber.

Some parts of this dense shadow have reflections of other colours in them. Mix Ultramarine Blue with some Titanium White and add Raw Umber until you get a warm grey colour and patch it in to the darker shadow. Add lighter areas of Titanium White mixed with Ultramarine Blue and a little Raw Umber for the dappled look in the shadows and on the sunlit side of the cottage. The chimney pot is Burnt Sienna. ▶



RIGHT A Moroccan Street Scene, by John Singer Sargent, 1879–80. Here the artist has completely understood how shadows behave when they fall on buildings and walls.

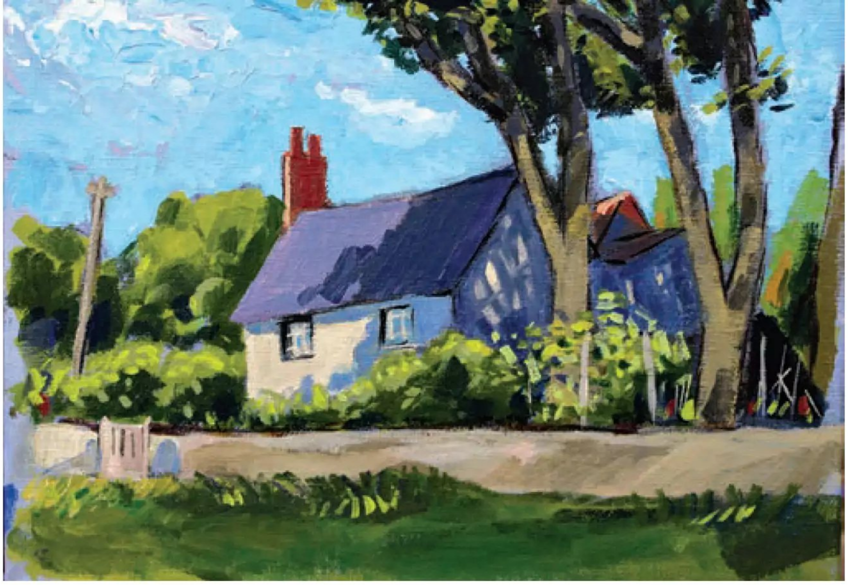


STAGE 3

In this stage we begin to give some form to the foliage in the picture, so mix some Winsor Blue with a little Cadmium Yellow and put in the shadow sides of the bushes and far trees. Use strokes that echo the general shape of the objects that you are describing. Push the brush over the underlying green colour so you get a varying thickness of paint. This process helps you get the feel of objects that are alive and growing. The undersides of the canopies of the foreground trees are almost completely in shadow so appear quite dark.

TIP

Keep an eye on your tones by standing back from your easel occasionally. Be careful not to overwork your piece during the final stages

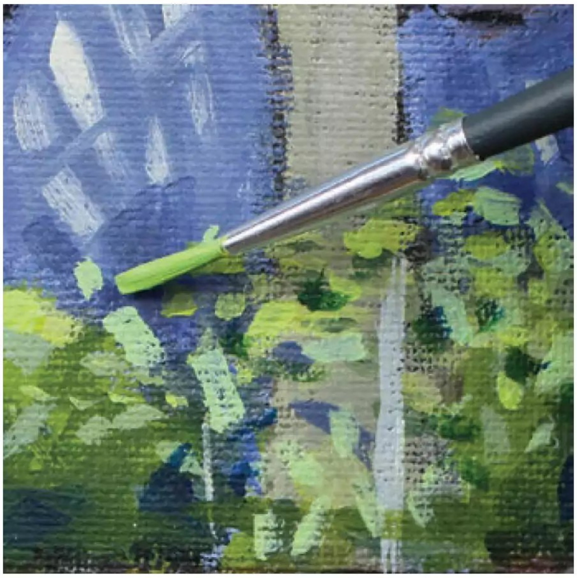


STAGE 4

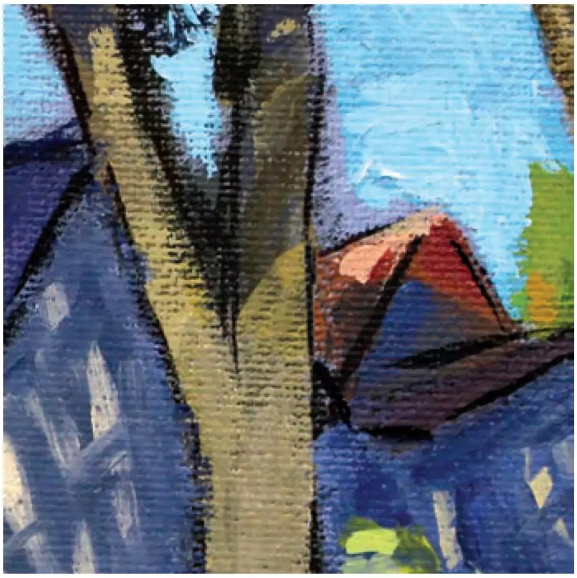
To give the trees and bushes more shape we need to add a mid-tone green. Mix Cadmium Yellow with Ultramarine Blue, adding a little Titanium White to get a tone that lies between the light and dark tones of the foliage. Paint in this colour next to the darker tone. Try to get this green to join the other two greens without making the transition too smooth.

To create the sunlight on the bushes in front of the cottage and in the canopies of the two big trees I have added lively brushstrokes on top of the three tones already there. This is the lightest green in the picture made by adding small quantities of Winsor Blue and Cadmium Yellow to Titanium White. For these strokes I used a synthetic, round-headed No. 6 brush.

The darker shadows on the tree trunks are Raw Umber mixed with a little Titanium White. I further developed the shadows on the cottage wall under the trees by adding flashes of a light tone of Raw Umber and Titanium White. The light on the chimney stack is the same as your original Burnt Sienna but with the addition of Titanium White. □



RIGHT When painting foliage, sometimes it is good practice to paint a highlight directly on to a dark patch. This gives the effect of individual leaves catching the light and lends a sparkle to your picture.



ABOVE A 'cast shadow' occurs when a shadow from one object falls onto another. When you are painting a cast shadow, as on the trunk of the tree, make it follow the shape of the object it falls on. If a shadow cuts across a form it can destroy the shape of it.

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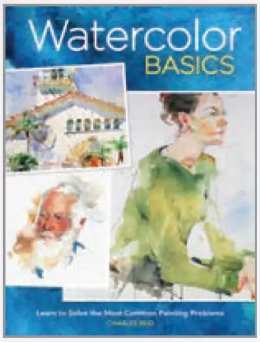
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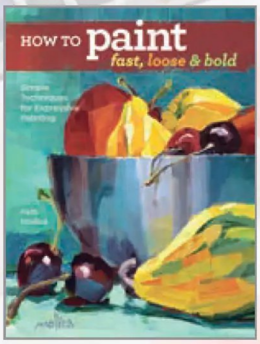
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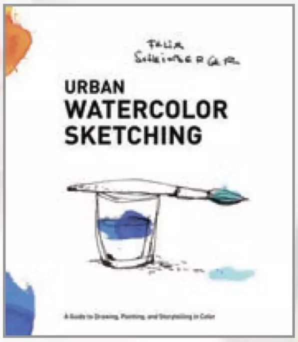
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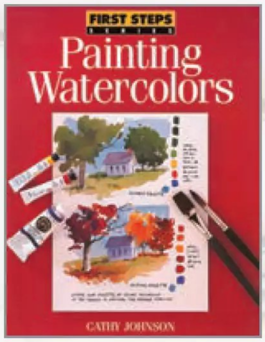
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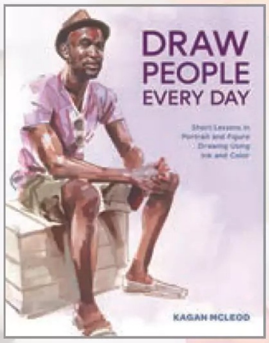
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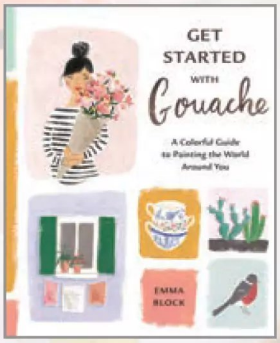
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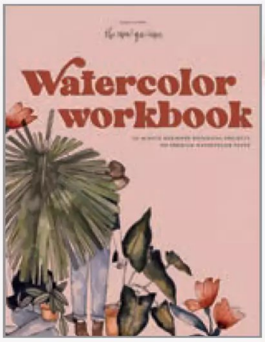
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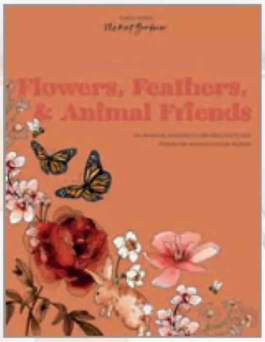
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OILS

Anyone who walks into my class or opens this book is already an artist. My job is not to make you paint like me, but to help you develop the skills to express your unique viewpoint.

I began oil painting at the age of ten and have loved it ever since. I have no doubt that you will too. It's no fluke that oil paint, which came into regular use in the 15th century, is still the most popular painting medium. Artists love the rich, gloopy nature of the paint, combined with the fact that it can be used in an infinite number of ways.

Famous for its slow drying time, oil paint is ideal for soft blending. Diluted as thin as watercolour, it makes rich, transparent glazes. Using a palette knife or hog-hair brush, we can create mountainous textures of paint up to an inch thick.

Unique to oil paint is the amazing ability to retain the three-dimensional shape of the artist's mark. Each brushstroke is like a little time capsule, showing us the exact touch and speed of the painter's hand.

Those who see oil painting as a difficult option, suitable only for the serious professional, have usually been put off by the mystery surrounding drying times, or confusing rules such as 'fat over lean'. In fact, the rules of oil painting are very simple. Once you know them, you are free to do almost anything while producing works that will last for generations.

For me, the best thing of all about oil paint is its forgiving nature. I'm one of those people who never get it right first time. With oil paint, you can scrape it off and repaint as many times as you like.

Starting out as a painter, you will learn more from doing several small paintings than labouring away on one huge canvas. In the step-by-step demonstrations, I give as clear instructions as I can, but remember that most artists are a touch rebellious. If you feel like tinkering with the techniques or substituting subjects, I won't tell.

The aim here is not to produce six gallery paintings in a uniform style. We will be tackling lots of different subjects and using a whole range of techniques. Give them all a try and discard the ones that don't feel natural. By the end of them, you won't be afraid of any subject and you'll have some really exciting approaches up your sleeve.

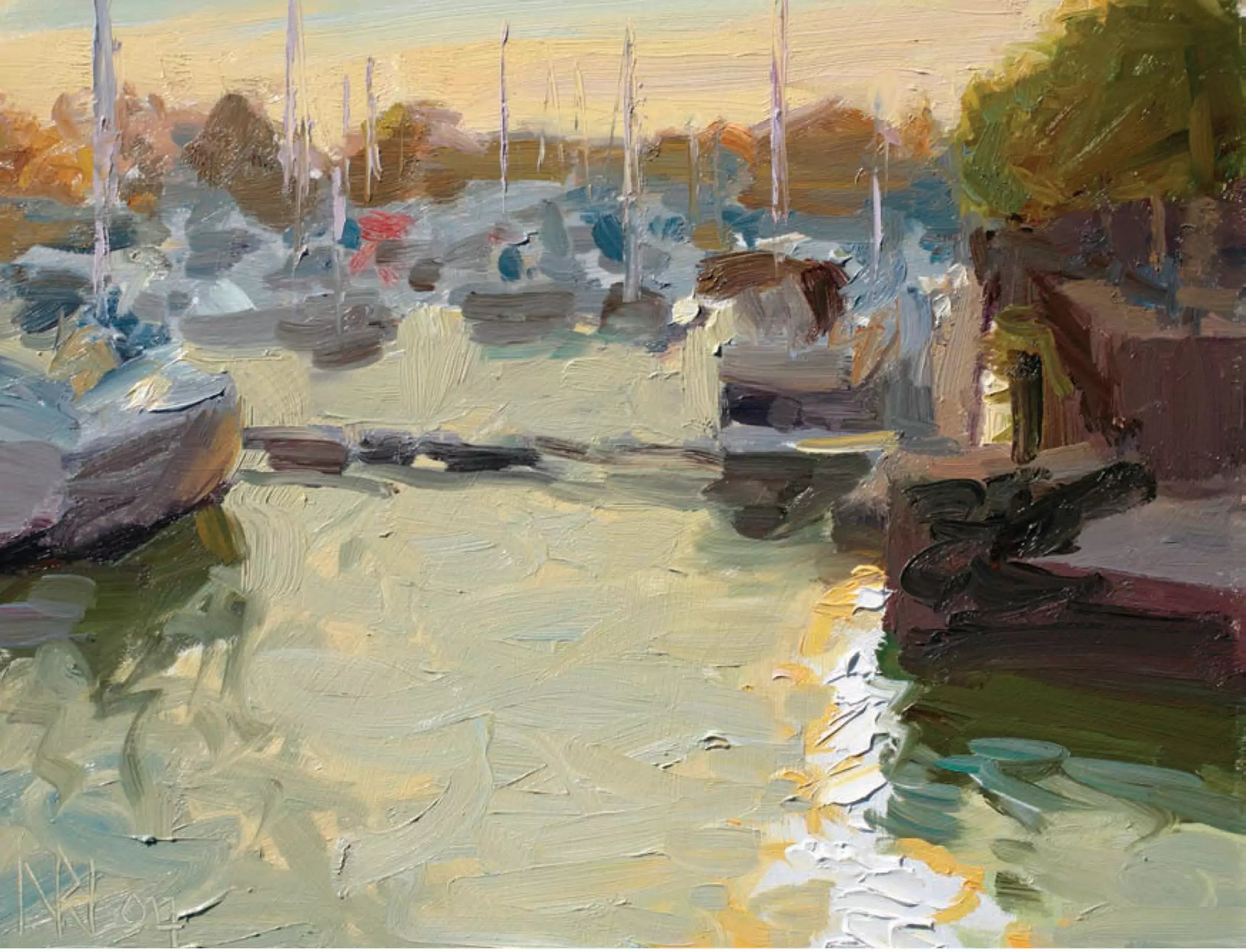
The approach to painting presented here is just one of many. It is my approach, developed through emulating great art of the past and based on my love of light, colour and paint texture. Take all you can from these pages, but borrow from other sources too. Don't be afraid of losing your artistic identity in learning from others. Your own personality will always shine through.

There are a couple of unexpected benefits to becoming an oil painter. One is the close and supportive community of artists you will discover in your local area and online. The other is the opening of your eyes to the beauty of the world around you. It comes with a warning. You might find yourself, driving around town, distracted by glorious reflected light from a brick wall.

Regardless of the stage in life you are taking up painting, there will be challenges and triumphs aplenty. It is not unusual for the absolute beginner to produce a scintillating, lively piece of art, while

Norman

SHUTTERSTOCK

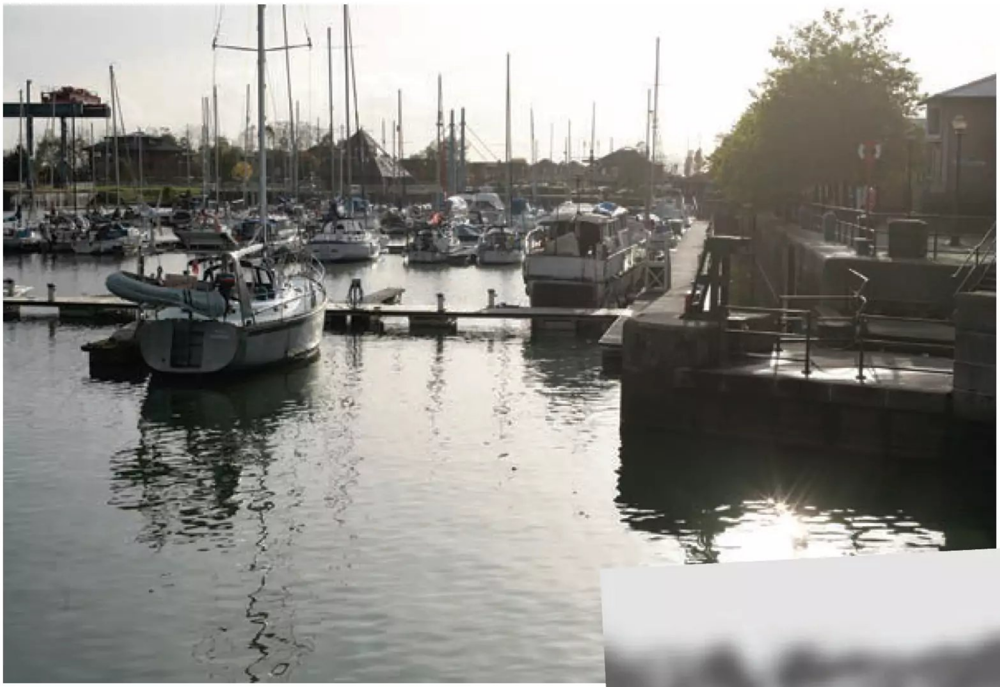


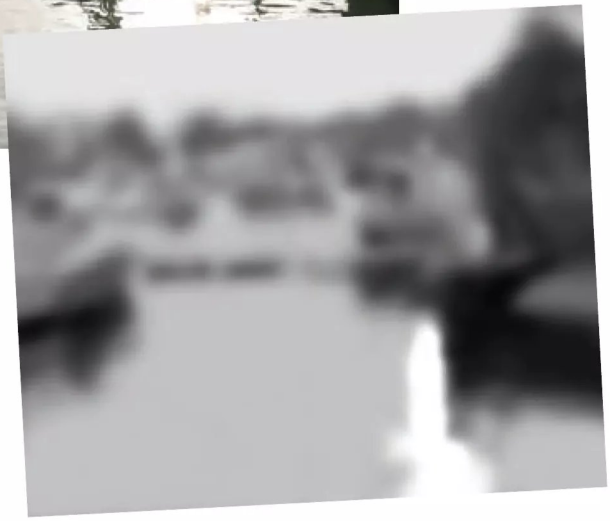
Boats at sundown

This project introduces you to a quick technique suitable for painting fleeting subjects outdoors. You will devise a simple tonal plan, then proceed directly from a cursory drawing into applying thick, luscious paint. You will learn to use the effects of aerial perspective to create depth in your painting

Colours needed

- Phthalo Blue V
- Iridian Hue
- Cadmium Yellow Pale
- Yellow Ochre
- Burnt Sienna
- Permanent Alizarin Crimson
- Cadmium Red
- Ivory Black
- Titanium White





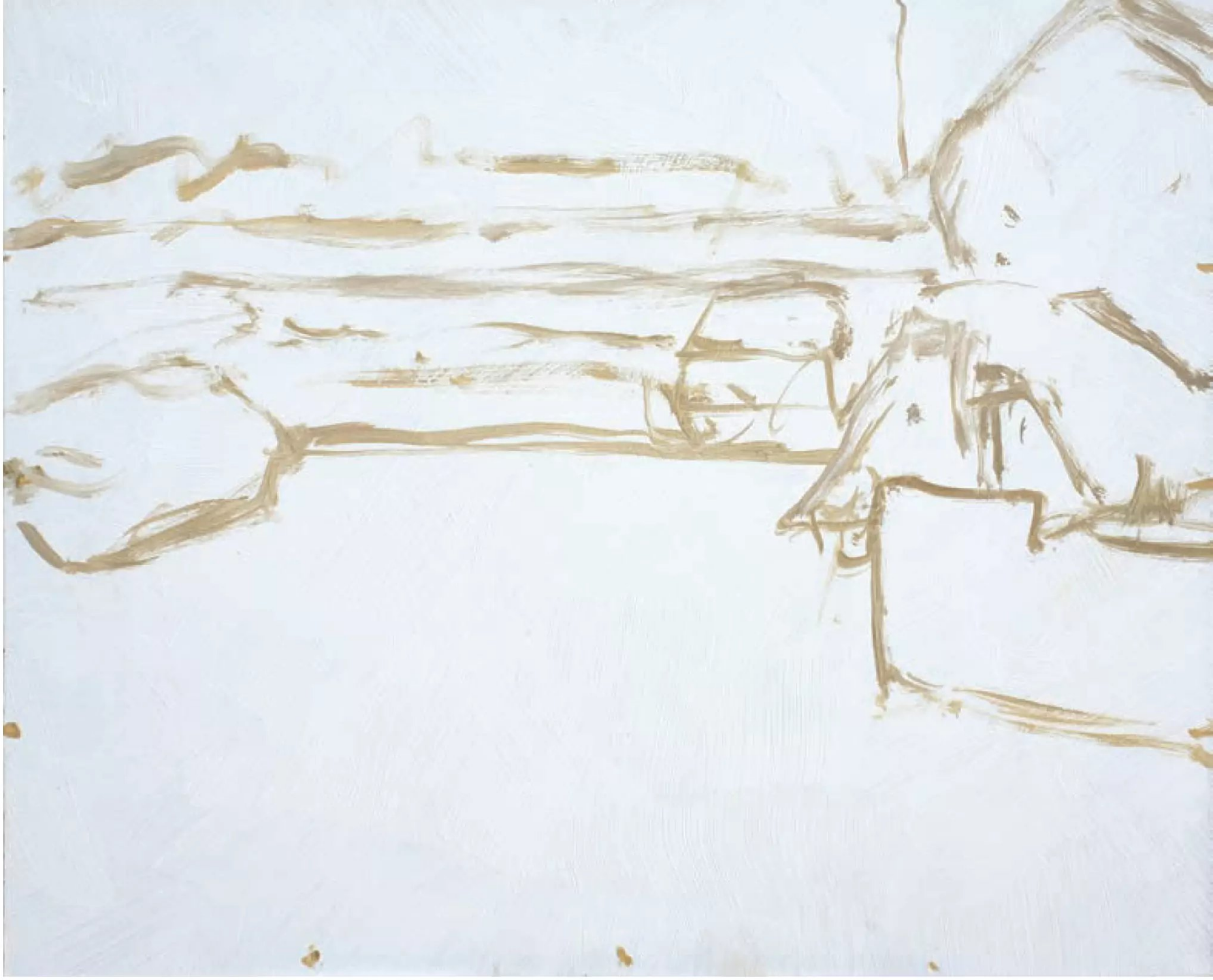
This painting of the boats at Preston Marina, just round the corner from my studio, was completed in the last hour and a half of daylight. Although the light changes quickly in the morning and evening, providing a time challenge for the outdoor painter, artists love these 'golden hours'. The low sun casts dramatic shadows and the light has a much warmer glow than in the middle of the day. You can see by comparing the finished painting to the photo how the camera struggles to capture the subtle beauty of such dramatic lighting situations.

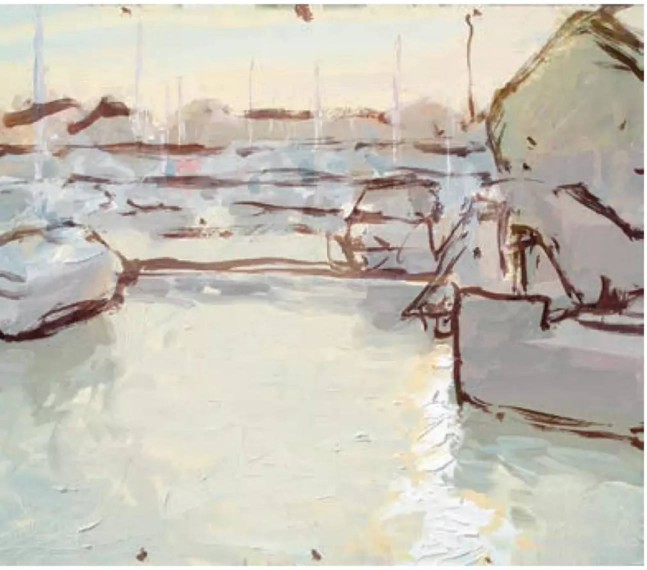
This piece is painted 'contre-jour', a French term meaning 'into the light'. The sun is in front of you and most of the subject is in shadow, with just touches of light at the edges. You can copy my painting as an introduction to working in this direct manner or work from your own photo of a similar subject.

TONAL PLAN

When working outdoors in changing light, it is easy to start changing the painting over and over as the light moves. This chasing game is fun but unlikely to produce a good composition. To feel in control, it is best to devise a tonal plan before starting. Some artists do thumbnail sketches to organise their tonal values. I find it quicker to eye up the subject through a viewfinder, squinting to reduce it to a pattern of light and dark shapes similar to this blurred photo (see above, right). Zoom the viewfinder in and out and try it both vertically and horizontally. The view you settle on is your tonal plan. Try to stick to this arrangement of lights and darks.

Trust your instincts. Go with what looks best to you at the time and you will often happen upon one of the compositional 'rules'.
Here the lightest part of the scene, the reflection of the sun on the water, is bound to draw the eye, especially as it is right next to the darkest area of the harbour wall. I avoided putting this focal point in the middle of the painting, but found that it looked better around the lower-right third. ▶





ABOVE The overlay image.

STAGE 1

The excitement (or sometimes panic) of trying to capture a subject outdoors leads to changes in technique. Rather than a careful drawing followed by the blocking in of local colours, here you will execute a rapid drawing using a mixture of brown, black and white, very diluted to make the paint flow.

The important thing, and the reason I went to the trouble of marking half and quarter ways around the edges of the canvas, is that the large shapes are where I want them, relating to the view through the viewfinder.

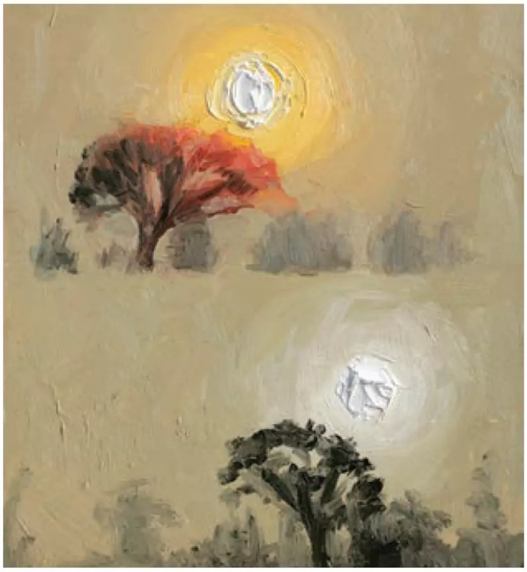
It takes courage to proceed from such a cursory drawing directly into thick paint, but remember you can always correct things later. To prove it, I have overlaid my initial outlines onto an image of the finished painting. You can see the places where I haven't quite got the drawing right to start with.

The marks in a painting tell the whole story of how it is made. Armchair painting will not result in lively, energetic marks. In this project, I challenge you to start piling on the paint right from the start. The edgy feeling of correcting as you go lends an urgency to your marks that you can't achieve in any other way.

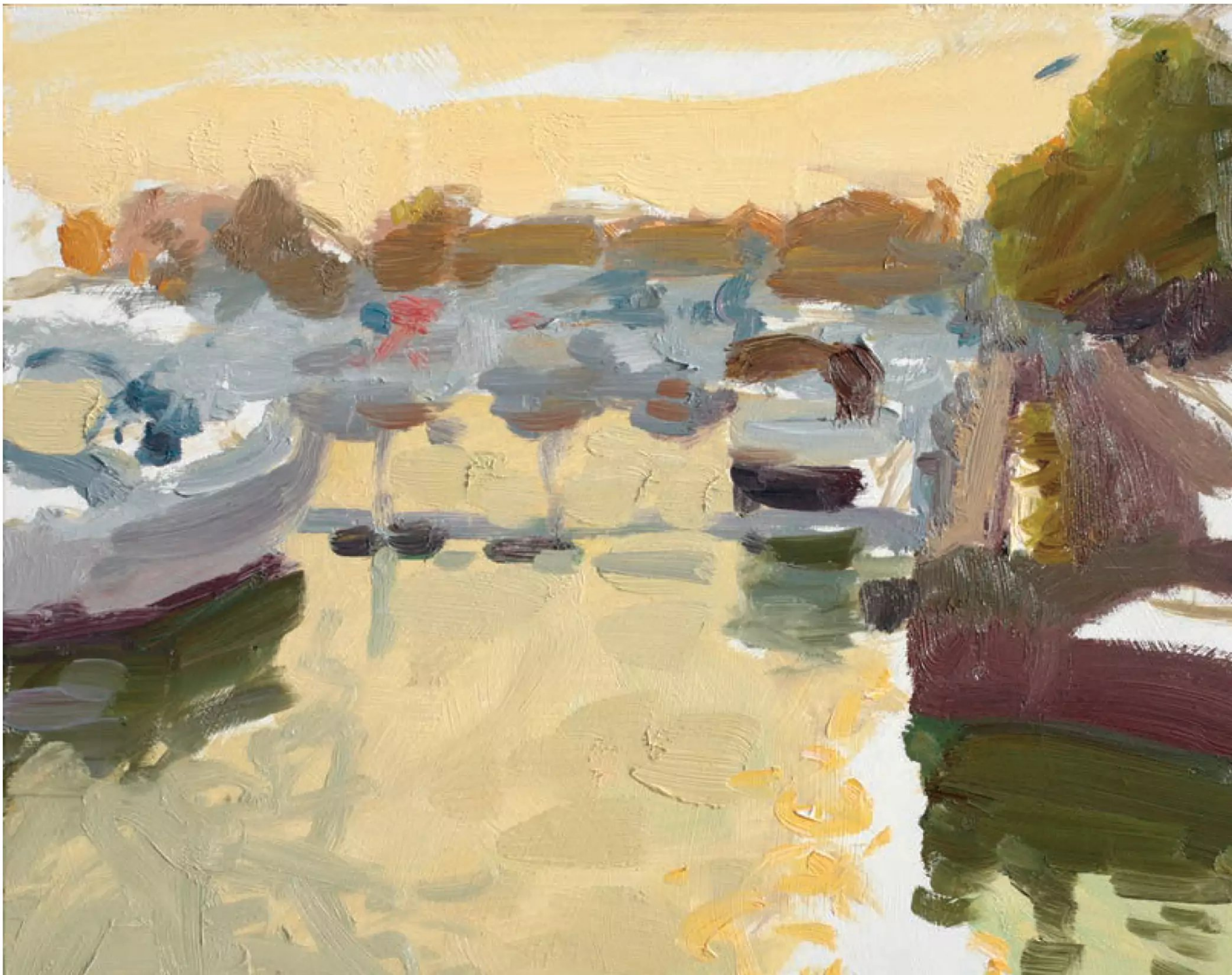
STAGE 2

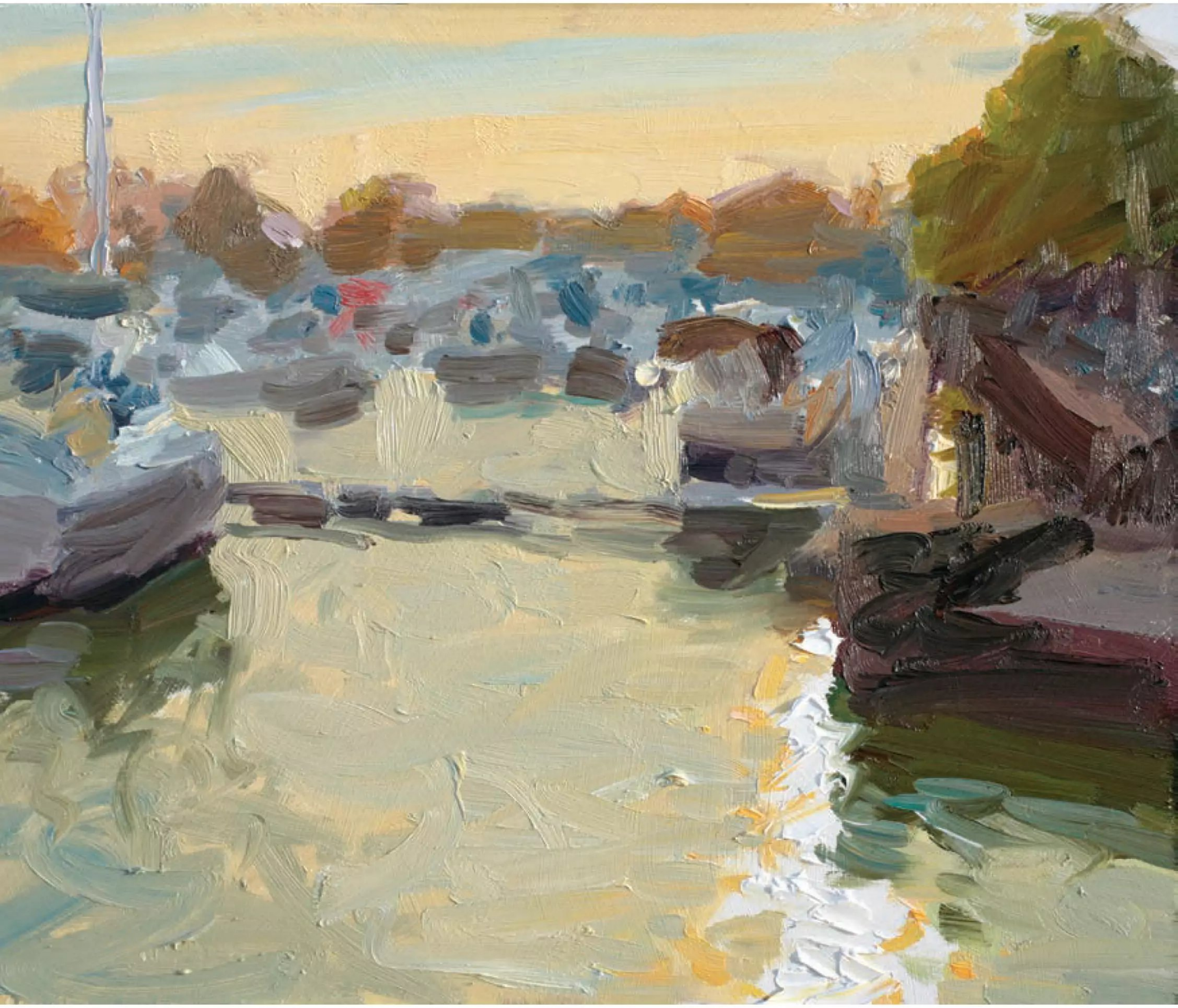
To cover the canvas as soon as possible, use your largest brushes (Nos. 6 and 8) and start with the largest blocks of colour. The warm, delicate colours of the sky and water should be put down early so that they don't get muddied. The sky is a simple mix of yellow, red and white. Any colour reflected in water appears darker and duller, so add some viridian and crimson to this mix for the colour of the water.

Leave a slice of clean canvas in the sky (to be filled in later) and for the brightest reflection in the water. Notice how these areas glow once everything else is made a little darker. You can add to this impression of luminosity by creating a 'halo' of warm colours around the brightest areas. Have fun with the swirly strokes of orange around the sunlight on the water. Wherever the trees meet the sky, introduce more touches of orange and yellow. ▶



ABOVE A halo of warm colour conveys the power of the light to dissolve the edges of whatever it comes in contact with. The painting shows glowing light with a warm halo (above) and without (below). Which do you prefer?





STAGE 3

To make the reflection of the sun on the water catch as much light as possible, use the tip of the palette knife to deposit pure white paint into that area.

Returning to the sky, mix up a generous pile of light blue and fill in the white gap with a few bold strokes, resisting the urge to correct or blend. If you had painted the whole of the sky with orange-yellow and then brushed the blue section into it, the resulting mix would have been a dull green – not great for a glowing sky. As it is, the orange and blue sit side by side, complementing each other.

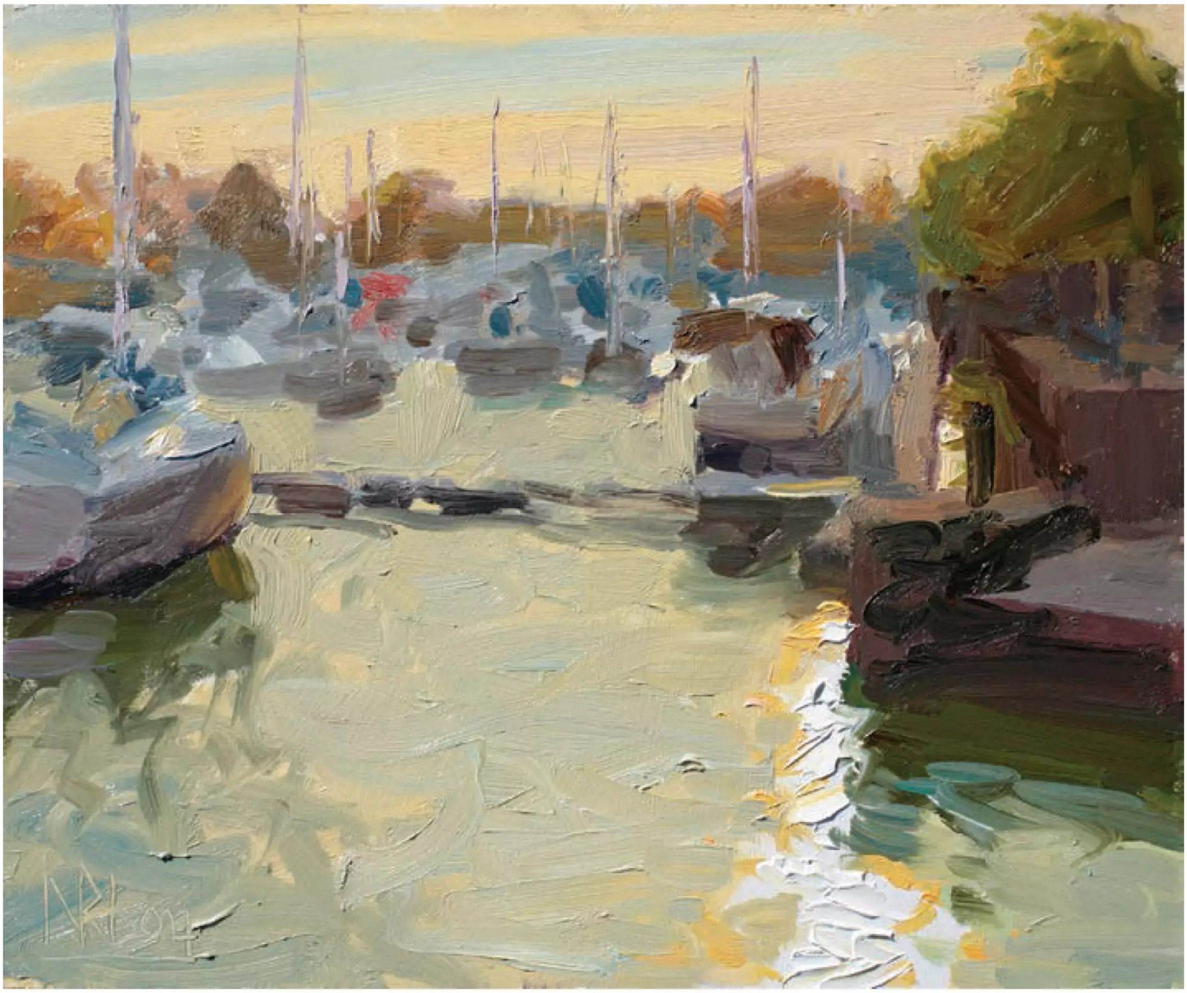
Even though you haven't been too meticulous with the perspective lines, you can still create a sense of depth in this scene through a wonderful effect called aerial perspective. Paint your darkest tonal values in the foreground, gradually getting lighter as you move into the distance. This mimics the layers of atmosphere, containing moisture and dust, which make distant things more hazy.

STAGE 4

You won't have time to paint every boat mast, but if you note the way they get thinner and their tops appear to get lower as they go into the distance, you can use them to add to the impression of distance. To make a mast, place the edge of the palette knife into a pile of pink/purple paint and stamp this onto the painting, sometimes dragging downwards. In accordance with perspective, the closest mast is darker and wider than the more distant ones.

As you can see, I'm no expert at painting boats, but I do love to paint light. Treat yourself to the highlight on the left-hand boat, but start with a large blob of orange-yellow to create a halo, followed by a smaller blob of white in the centre. There is just time for the warm (orange) reflected light on the underside of the hull and its reflection in the water.

Be careful if you find yourself having too much fun adding details – you must know when to stop. If your painting has captured your impression of the scene, the viewer can fill in the details. When it comes to your signature, if there is no obvious area that needs covering up, nor any colour that needs balancing, go for the unobtrusive option and scratch your name into the wet paint with the handle of your brush. ◻



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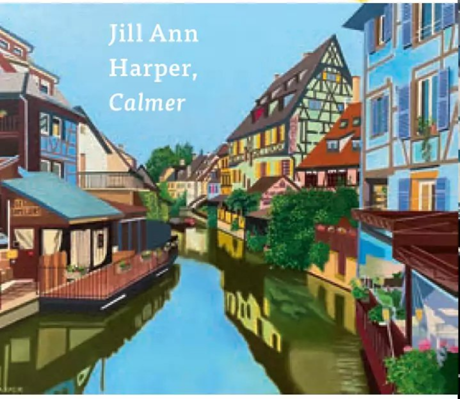
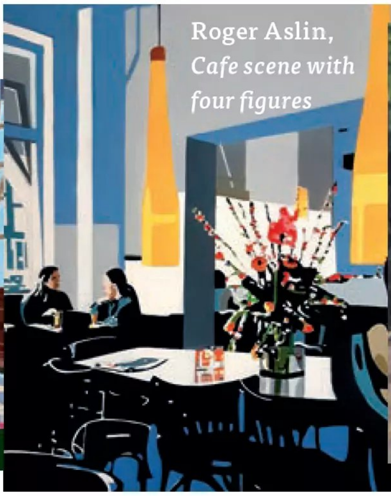
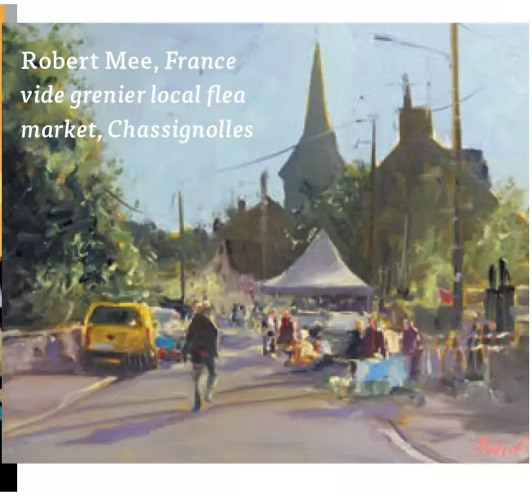

Jill Ann Harper, *Calmer*


Roger Aslin, *Cafe scene with four figures*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